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TRADE PROTOCOL APPROVED BETWEEN EGYPT, SUDAN

Khartoum AL-AYYAM in Arabic 18 Mar 81 p 1

[Article by Mahjub Khayri: "People's Assembly Ratifies Kuwaiti Loan and Trade Protocol Agreements Between Sudan and Egypt"]

[Text] In its session yesterday, the National People's Assembly ratified a Kuwaiti loan agreement and a trade protocol agreement between Sudan and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The special report on the Kuwaiti loan, which the Economy, Planning and Budget Committee had completed and submitted to the assembly, stated that the Kuwaiti agreement concerning a loan of 1.3 million Kuwaiti dinars was the culmination of efforts put forth to provide the necessary means to transport agricultural products from the production areas in the al-Rahad project to processing centers in the city of (al-Fawurasaf) approximately 84 kilometers from the general headquarters of the al-Rahad Agricultural Organization and on to the al-Qadarif public highway.

With regard to trade protocol between Sudan and Egypt, the report of the Economy, Planning and Budget Committee explained that the volume of commercial exchange within the framework of protocol reached 117,580 million accounting dollars (at the official exchange rate), representing an increase of 16 percent over the 1979 figure.

The report stated that trade protocol for 1980 fixed the volume of Egyptian exports to Sudan at 49.63 million American accounting dollars as compared to Sudanese exports to Egypt valued at 67.95 [million] American accounting dollars, providing a difference of $18.32 million with which to defray part of the existing debt in the common account.

The report added that trade protocol between Sudan and Egypt fulfilled the requests of the Sudanese side calling for increases in a number of important commodities such as rice and white cement, an increase in the quota of camels from $11 million to $15 million, and the institution of a system of "open licenses" for all imported commodities on the list of Sudanese exports except for sesame in order to initiate free trade between the two countries.

In addition, AL-AYYAM reports that the list of Sudanese exports to Egypt as specified in the protocol includes camels, sheep, cattle, hides, sesame, white beans, gum arabic, watermelon seeds, karkade, animal fodder, and vegetable oils.

The list of Egyptian exports to Sudan includes textiles, rice, fruits, canned goods, electric equipment, glass, tires, building materials, chemical products, and cinematic and television films and series.

8591
CSO: 4802/639

SAUDI ARABIA, QATAR AGREE ON JOINT STEEL PROJECT

Doha AL-RAYAH in Arabic 7 Apr 81 p 2

[Article: "Shaykh Faysal ibn Thani and Dr Ghazi al-Qusaybi: An Accord for Cooperation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia in the Iron and Steel Industries"]

[Excerpts] Yesterday afternoon his Excellency Dr Ghazi al-Qusaybi, minister of industry and electricity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia departed al-Doha with his delegation returning home at the end of his 3 day visit to Qatar.

Dr al-Qusaybi described his visit to Qatar in a statement he gave shortly before his departure saying that the visit was extremely successful because of the sincere desire of his Excellency Shaykh Kha''fa ibn Hamd Al Thani, amir of Qatar and his Highness King Khalid ibn 'Abd al-'A. leader of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to lend support to bilateral relations in all fields, and especially in the industrial field.

He added in his statement to the Qatari News Agency that, according to the instructions of the amir, he had completed the signing of two agreements between the two nations. The first agreement is aimed at strengthening planning and cooperation in the area of petrochemicals manufacturing and the second is aimed at the developing cooperation in the area of iron and steel manufacturing.

His Excellency expressed the hope that both agreements would be the start of joint industrial projects and firm planning the positive effects of which would be felt by the citizens of the two fraternal countries.

The Saudi minister also praised the great industrial accomplishments achieved by Qatar in a short period of time, and he asserted that these accomplishments were not considered as a source of pride to the Qatari people alone, but as a source of pride for all peoples of the region.

He said: "I invite all those who have asked themselves or doubted or have raised questions about the industrial projects to visit them in Qatar, and I feel that their doubts will be allayed."

Yesterday morning in the Ministry of Industry and Agriculture building the signing of a cooperative agreement in the area of steel and iron manufacturing was completed between the Qatar Iron and Steel Company, Ltd and the Saudi Company for Basic Industries.

Signing for the Qatari company was his Excellency Shaykh Faysal ibn Thani Al Thani, minister of industry and agriculture, and signing for the Saudis was his Excellency Dr Ghazi al-Qusaybi, Minister of Industry and Electricity in the Kingdom.

Attending the signing ceremony for Qatar was Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mani', engineer and deputy Minister of Industry and Agricultural Affairs Office, and Jabr Khalifa al-Fayyad, director of the industry and agriculture minister's office.

Attending for the Saudis was his Excellency Muhammad al-Fahd al-'Isi, Saudi ambassador in al-Doha, and members of the delegation accompanying the Saudi minister.

The agreement enjoins that both the Saudi and Qatari parties should work on a feasibility study of setting up integrated factories for both iron and steel in Jubayl and Musay'id--in one or both countries depending on the findings of economic impact studies. Furthermore both parties will exchange information on supplies and prices of the raw materials needed for the production of iron and steel, as well as conditions on the world market relevant to the finished products.

Likewise the agreement requires that both countries cooperate in areas of training as a preliminary step toward forming a qualified cadre of nationals in both countries to operate and manage an iron and steel industry. A committee would be formed to follow the implementation of the decisions set forth in the agreement. It is to be chaired on the Saudi side by the vice-president of the Saudi Company for Basic Industries, and on the Qatari side by the vice-president of the board of directors of the Qatari Iron and Steel Company.

This committee will convene meetings every six months alternating between the capitals of the two countries. The first meeting will be held in Riyadh in May 1981.

This agreement will be the implementation of the two fraternal countries' policies to consolidate the foundations of sound cooperation, and to achieve effective systematic planning between both of them in all fields. It shows their desire to pursue this policy in the field of iron and steel production, considering it as a field of fundamental importance in supporting the economies of the two countries.

This agreement will also implement the rulings of the second paragraph of the economic treaty ratified between both countries in July 1973 in Riyadh. That treaty prompted both countries to promote the creation of joint economic development projects between them and between their citizens.

9587
CSO: 4802/681

VARIOUS KINGS, PRESIDENTS INVEST IN ISLAMIC HOLDING COMPANY

Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 16 Apr 81 p 15

/Article: "Establishment of an Islamic Holding Company with Capital of $1 Billion"/

/Text/ A spokesman for the Islamic Investment Company in Geneva has declared that Prince Muhammad al-Faysal Aal Sa'ud, son of the late King Faysal ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz and chairman of the board of the Islamic Investment Company, is taking part with a group of major Moslem businessmen in establishing a holding company to be called "the Islamic House of Finance." Shares of its capital will be offered in stages, until it totals $1 billion in value.

The honorary founders of this international organization include the rulers and presidents of a number of Islamic countries, members of royal families in the Arabian Peninsula, and major Moslem businessmen. At the present time measures successfully being taken for private subscription to the founding capital, which is $250 million. The rest of the capital will be covered by general subscription in all areas of the world.

The Islamic House of Finance will pursue investment and mutual guarantee activities and Islamic banking activities through its branches in 49 Islamic countries as well as branch countries in Europe, the United States of America and the Far East.

Success of the Speculative Drafts

The Islamic Investment Company spokesman announced that in the past 3 years the company has successfully issued speculative drafts for the Moslem public and financial institutions, in accordance with the principles and provisions of Islamic law, under the supervision of the company's Islamic law oversight council, which consists of senior Islamic clerics. These speculations have been successful in drawing and gathering millions of dollars from thousands of Moslem participants in all areas of the Islamic world.

All investments are made in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law, which prohibits transactions through usury, as the holy Koran stipulates. The company is in charge of carrying out operations in the international context and about 30 percent of the value of its bonds are concerned with development projects in Islamic countries. In the month of March, investors' profits were 19 percent on the American dollar and exceeded 22 percent on the Saudi riyal, based on the annual rate.

Mutual Guarantees instead of Insurance

Mutual guarantees which are the Islamic alternative to Western insurance, are made through certain speculations on religious bases which have been agreed to for the first time in the history of Islam.

In addition, two rulings have been issued, by the noble al-Azhar and the House of Judicial Rulings in Cairo, which is the summit of religious bodies.

The Secretariat General of the Authority of Senior Religious Scholars of the Chairmanship of the Department of Scholarly Research, Rulings, Proselytization and Guidance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has issued a ruling with a decree upholding and encouraging the speculations the Islamic Investment Company is making. This venerable authority is considered the highest power concerned with matters of Islamic law and basic Islamic provisions in the Islamic world. The ruling was issued by a decree dated 6 January 1981, and the following text was part of it:

"After studying these speculations, which the Islamic Investment Company is to issue, discuss and circulate opinions on, the council has considered the following:

"1. The council advises Moslems in general, and influential people among them in particular, to do what is in their power to protect their societies from usury and exposure to transgressions against God and his prophet and to take the initiative to establish Islamic banks and financial institutions and stimulate them so that people will thereby be able to deposit their money and invest it in ways which God has deemed permissible by reducing the activities of the insurance companies and usurious banks now in the hands of the most prominent Moslems.

"2. The council decrees by majority that it sees nothing in such speculation which is opposed to Islamic law."

The Historic Alternative

This historic decree is of great significance, since it is putting an end to the confusion regarding the religious position which prevails among the Islamic peoples. To the present time no Islamic alternative has been prepared to operate and take the place of the system followed in Western banks, which are founded on usury and the current Western system of insurance.

11887
CSO: 4802/691

POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF RESISTANCE FRONTS ANALYZED

Zurich NEUE ZUERCHER ZEITUNG in German 1-2 May 81 p 5

[Article by NEUE ZUERCHER ZEITUNG New Delhi Correspondent: "Three Years After the April Revolution: The Diversity of Afghan Resistance--Lack of Leadership"]

[Text] New Delhi, 26 April--The Afghan resistance fighters are organized in numerous groups, some of which are beset by severe internal conflicts. Active rebels and mere loudmouths meet in the Pakistani provincial capital of Peshawar, undisturbed by the local authorities. The "Islamic National Liberation Front," which had been founded in early 1980 at the urging of Islamic countries as a catchall of the major rebel groups, collapsed in early March in a cacophony of recriminations without really ever having functioned at all.

Fundamentalists and Traditionalists

The significant organizations among those holding court in Peshawar can be divided into Islamic fundamentalists and the more secular traditionalists. The Hezb-e-Islami (Islamic Party) has the longest experience in guerilla warfare, inasmuch as its origins date back to the early 1970s. It is said that at that time it was subservient to Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto, who, as a tactic in the Pashtunistan controversy, was seeking to exert pressure on President Daoud, who had come into power in 1973. The Pakistani-inspired insurrection in the Panj Valley in July 1975 was the baptism of fire of activist "engineer" Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his comrades-in-arms, among them his mentor Burhaniddin Rabani, a professor of Islamic law at Kabul University. Rabani and Hekmatyar came to a parting of the ways a long time ago. Hekmatyar is the leader of one wing of the Hezb-e-Islami (another wing is led by 60-year old Younis Khalis), while Rabani is the head of Yamiat-e-Islami (Islamic Society). The fundamentalist extreme Hezb-e-Islami claims to have the largest following among the freedom fighters. A considerable portion of Pathan eastern and southern Afghanistan is indeed controlled by Hezb-e-Islami's well equipped warriors. Rabani's support within Afghanistan is somewhat smaller, but he is said to have established a base in western Afghanistan near Herat.

Noteworthy among the moderately religious resistance groups is the Mahaz Inqillab Islami (National Islamic Front) which has shown some success in southeastern Afghanistan. It is led by Sayed Ahmed Gailani, a Sufist Pir (clergyman), who was the subject of conversation as a result of his trip to Washington last March. A close associate of Gailani's is Pir Sibghatullah Mujadiddy, a strict, but at the

some time liberal theologian, and his Jabhai Nijat-i-Milli (National Liberation Front). More fundamentalist tendencies than with Gailani and Mujadiddy exist with Maulavi Mohamed Nabi Mohammedi, a mullah, and his Harakeli Inqillab Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement). All three of these groups find support primarily among the socially advantaged Pathan strata which traditionally have had good relations with the West.

While the Peshawar-based groups are primarily engaged in fighting the Soviet occupation forces and their Afghan helpers, the ethnic minorities are also fighting the Pathan dominance established decades ago, and therefore the groups in Peshawar. A loosely constituted "interior front" consists of the central Afghan Hazaras, who are said to be descendants of Chengis Khan's hordes, the Northern Afghan Tajiks and Uzbeks and the eastern Afghan Nuristanis. They get little extraneous support and are partially confronted with a blockade by Soviet troops, which are trying to starve them out. However, some French organizations, among them the Aide Medicale Internationale and Medecins Sans Frontieres, have lately provided secret help to them on a humanitarian basis.

After a full decade's opposition against the Daoud, Taraki, Amin and Karmal regimes, the considerably more numerous rebels still do not have a common leadership. What is mainly lacking is a universally acceptable leader. Efforts to promote King Zaher Shah who was toppled by Daoud and is now living in Rome, to become a figure of overall integration, have failed for the present. The fundamentalists especially wanted nothing to do with him. Because of all the dissension there has been no arms aid to date, neither from the Islamic world nor from the West. It is true that some resistance fighters are being trained in Egypt's Alexandria, others in Zahidan, Iran; that Gailani has found much empathy in Washington; that especially Saudi Arabia is contributing financial support; and that Pakistan tolerates the rebel presence. But in the final analysis, all the groups and tribes are acting individually and alone, leading a number of private wars against the Karmal regime and the Red Army. These skirmishes are sufficient to put continuing pressure on the plus or minus 85,000 Soviet soldiers; but no decisive actions can come about in this manner.

Foreign-Supported Banditry

As far as the Afghan government is concerned, which has no support whatever among the remaining population and which was unable to implement the establishment of a "Patriotic Front" which had been proclaimed for 21 March, the Afghan New Year's Day, due to lack of support, the problem is nothing but foreign-supported banditry. Minister of Education Anahita Ratebzad recently declared in an interview with an Indian journalist that while the interior enemy had been defeated, outside aggression was continuing. Nevertheless, the regime does not appear to feel all that secure. Reports from Kabul indicate that during the last few weeks Soviet troops have taken over security services in the capital from the Afghan military. Meanwhile the sovietization of controlled areas continues. One example for this is the appointment of more than 30 Soviet professors to the orphaned University of Kabul; another, the de facto rule of the country by Soviet advisors.

In the present stalemate, where neither the freedom fighters nor the Red Army are able to gain any decisive victories, it is highly unlikely that the negotiations by the United Nations' Secretary General's personal representative, Perez de Cuellar, with Kabul and Islamabad will prove successful. It is obvious that the two

countries' respective positions are incompatible. And the proposed U.S. arms aid to Pakistan should further serve to exacerbate the conflict between Islamabad and Kabul. While Iran is playing its own unfathomable game which is directed not only against the Karmal regime but also against General Zia's Sunnite military regime. Thus many things tend to confirm the opinion that 3 years after the April Revolution there is no prospect for peace in Southwest Asia nor for a speedy end to civil war and the flight of masses of refugees.

9271
CSO: 4401/55

SOVIETS TESTING NEW WEAPONS AGAINST REBELS

Hamburg DER SPIEGEL in German 11 May 81 pp 154-155

[Unattributed article: "Code Word Extraction"]

[Text] The Soviet Union is testing new weapons in Afghanistan. An undesired side effect: Previously little-known weapons have been making their way to the West — via adventurous routes.

In June 1980 the telephone rang at the home of Philip Sessarego, 29, in the city of Hereford in the west of England. The call was to take him just 38 kilometers outside the Soviet-occupied Afghan capital of Kabul. Together with a friend who had served with British commando units, ex-paratrooper Sessarego set out for London to meet with the caller, whom even today he will give no name other than "boss."

The "boss" first explored their interest in an anti-guerrilla military training program in an undisclosed Middle Eastern country. Then he came to the point: He was interested in "bits and pieces" of weapons which the Soviet Union was using in its struggles in Afghanistan.

Since the items that had arrived in the West previously by way of Pakistan had proved unsatisfactory, he was proposing a series of adventurous operations (code-named Extraction I, II and III) in the Afghanistan theater of war.

Sessarego agreed to the proposal and, as he told the London SUNDAY TIMES recently, received from the "boss" 300 pounds sterling to prepare for the trip — which, as the SUNDAY TIMES surmises, was probably backed by the CIA, the American intelligence agency.

On 9 July 1980, Sessarego flew to Islamabad where he met a contact man who filled him in on further details of his Extraction mission. He was given two cameras and a list of more than 30 individual items of Soviet military equipment in which his employers showed an intense interest: tank parts, especially front armor plating; guided missiles; electronic and telecommunications equipment; helicopter weapons; devices for the spraying of chemical warfare agents; a device to divert heat-seeking antiaircraft rockets; and pieces of the light metal, titanium.

Sessarego set out with this list on his first mission to Afghanistan, one which sounds archaic in the light of modern technical means of gathering intelligence, but which nevertheless has a concrete background.

Soviet weapons technology seldom boasts spectacular breakthroughs — unlike the advances made by the United States and other Western producers of armaments. Instead, it is based on a long-range evolutionary concept: New variations are constantly derived from proven basic elements.

Thus it happens that Western intelligence agencies are frequently familiar with the general features of certain weapons, but the details remain obscure. Unless an entire weapons system falls into Western military hands now and then — as happened in 1976 when a MiG-25 flown by a Soviet pilot landed in Japan — the agencies have to depend upon their analysis of photographs. Only the possession and then the possible testing of a weapon — whether performed in their own country or by allies — permits a definitive assessment.

And, as the United States did in Vietnam, the Soviet Union is testing some of its new weapons in Afghanistan — for instance, the AK-74 assault rifle, which supersedes the famous and most widely used rapid-fire rifle in the world, the AK-47.

Not used by the armies of the USSR and its allies until the end of the 1970's, the AK-74 confirms the trend toward smaller-caliber infantry weapons. Just as its American counterpart — the M-16, with a caliber of 5.56 mm — caused gruesome injuries in the jungles of Vietnam, the small-caliber Soviet projectiles measuring only 5.45 mm in diameter are inflicting devastating wounds on the Afghan resistance fighters.

This is because a shift in the center of gravity toward the rear causes the bullets to tilt or tumble when they strike the human body, thus having the effect of the formerly dreaded dumdum bullets.

The Soviets are also using a new rifle-mortar, the AGS-17, which can fire between 90 and 100 rounds per minute at a distance of 700 to 800 meters. A conventional mortar can get off at most about 25 rounds per minute.

The shells fired by the new Soviet model contain plastic needles or iron pins, the effect of which is absolutely lethal within a radius of 4 to 5 meters from the point of impact. And the plastic needles make it impossible to x-ray the injuries of the wounded.

In April 1981, Soviet diplomat Mikhail Systenko, one of the deputies to the UN secretary-general, praised as "a decisive step forward" the ban on these same plastic particles inside shells; this was during the signing of the convention on protection from weapons which cause needless suffering or are especially cruel. The Soviet Union was among the first to sign this convention, but it nevertheless was forced to accept criticism of its Afghanistan invasion before the Russell Tribunal which met last week in Stockholm.

It could not be proved conclusively that the Soviets are employing chemical warfare agents, although this had been asserted repeatedly by the Afghans.

"Extraction I," the mission on which Sassarego set out alone from the Pakistani frontier in the summer of 1980, proved to be a failure, for instead of captured battle tanks from which the agent wanted parts, the Muslim resistance fighters were able to produce only ordinary military vehicles.

The second attempt, launched somewhat later, was more productive: At the end of a 280-kilometer march on foot which brought him as far as the environs of the capital city of Kabul, he was able to capture an unexploded air-to-surface missile from a downed Mi-24 combat helicopter along with some of its titanium armor plating, a new type of mortar shell and an antipersonnel fragmentation bomb.

On the way back from the 10-day march he taught two groups of Muslim resistance fighters how to use a captured Russian Goryunov machine gun and an 82-mm mortar that had been abandoned.

But the "Extraction III" mission, on which Sessarego embarked with his friend San Evans shortly before the Afghan winter set in, was less successful. The shopping list submitted by the "boss" had contained 27 weapons or parts of weapons that were wanted, but the two men were able to bring back only additional titanium samples and a rotor blade which had been sawed off the downed combat helicopter. The Soviets had tried to destroy the helicopter with explosive charges, and the guerrillas had removed some "souvenirs."

All the same, the rotor blade might give an indication of the helicopter's lifting capacity. Thus, despite the meager prize, "Extraction III" also showed that at least in principle it is possible to gain access to the desired Soviet weapons in Afghanistan.

A fourth mission would probably not work, however: When news of the "Extraction" operations had gotten around among former intelligence agents and would-be mercenaries, and they began to gather along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, the government of Pakistan declared them persons non grata.

7498
CSO: 4403/58

PROBLEMS OF REFUGEE MASSES DESCRIBED

Zurich NEUE ZUERCHER ZEITUNG in German 29 Apr 81 p 3

[Article by NEUE ZUERCHER ZEITUNG New Delhi correspondent: "Three Years After the April Revolution: Self-confident Freedom Fighters in Afghanistan--Limitation on the Red Army's Control"]

[Text] New Delhi, 26 April--Last Monday was the third anniversary of the April revolution in Afghanistan. Portions of the country have been reduced to rubble; it is occupied by Soviet troops and has an unpopular government. About one-fifth of the Afghan population has already fled its homeland for Pakistan and Iran and the exodus continues unabated. The freedom fighters have gained in strength and are resisting the invasion troops in an unexpectedly effective manner. But they cannot look forward to victory. The future of Afghanistan is more clouded than ever. On the one hand there are efforts toward an increasing Sovietization; on the other, the occupying forces are totally unable to exercise real control outside the cities except for important traffic junctions. Due largely to their continuing internal squabbles, the freedom fighters are unable to establish a credible alternative to Babrak Karmal's Soviet-supported regime. And political negotiations, with or without the participation of the United Nations, have only the most negligible prospects of success.

1.8 Million Refugees

At present an estimated minimum of 1.8 million Afghans are in Pakistani territory, including approximately 80,000 nomads (Powindahs) who failed to migrate to Afghanistan last summer. In January and February alone the authorities registered about 250,000 new refugees. An official of the U.S. State Department recently stated officially that at present the largest group of refugees in the world had come into being in Pakistan. It is not known for certain how many Afghans have fled to Iran. One half million is usually considered to be a realistic figure; but a few days ago a highly placed official of the Iranian Ministry of the Interior estimated the number of refugees to be another 1.8 million. In Pakistan, the northwestern border region carries the main burden. Almost 1.5 million Afghans have found refuge there. Almost 400,000 refugees are currently living in the desert province of Baluchistan. In Iran, the refugees are housed mainly in Sistan and Khorasan in specially constructed camps, unless they have found refuge in the cities.

The U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) coordinates international humanitarian aid in Pakistan; Iran has so far declined international support. UNHCR and other international and private rescue organizations spent 200 million dollars during 1980 to provide newly arrived refugees with blankets and tents and to dispense food, clothing and medicines to them. Pakistan's military regime claims to have contributed another 100 million dollars. The huge tent cities which existed 1 year ago are mostly a thing of the past. Adobe huts with corrugated iron roofs, constructed with the help of the refugee commission, now frequently predominate. The refugees have become permanent residents. UNICEF arranges for wells to be drilled and water mains to be installed. The World Health Organization is taking measures to control epidemic tuberculosis, provides mass inoculations of children against cholera and childhood diseases and attempts to control the spread of malaria. Volunteer organizations provide medical assistance and made food, clothing, blankets and tents available.

This relatively efficient aid program contributes significantly to the Afghan's exodus from their homeland. Many refugees experience their first medical attention ever in Pakistan. The food provided by the World Food Program covers basic daily requirements; money is available to the families for small additional purchases. Poverty either does not exist or is in any case less harsh than at home. Because of this, many international aid officials believe that only about half the number of refugees are "for real." The other half, they think, has been attracted by better living conditions rather than having fled danger and poverty.

This great immigration poses new problems daily. Especially in some districts of Baluchistan, the number of immigrants exceeds that of the local population. The natural resources of this poor region are thereby taxed excessively. The refugees have already decimated whole forests in their search for firewood. Grazing grounds show every sign of overgrazing by the newly introduced herds. In Baluchistan alone, an additional 1.5 million animals are grazing, about a 50-percent increase over the domestic herds. On local markets, the increased demand for consumer goods causes an often significant rise in prices; at the same time, the increased availability of labor exerts a depressing influence upon salaries. While the tribes on both sides of the Durand Line (the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan) are related to each other, it can be expected that the growing competition and battle for survival will result in increasing bitterness and shrill controversy. Last fall there were already clashes between the local population and the refugee Afghans.

Better Equipment

Sixteen months after its invasion, the Red Army is less in control of the situation than ever. The approximately 85,000 Soviet soldiers have been unable to suppress resistance; control by the occupation forces and the few remaining Afghan units is restricted to the major cities and, with interruptions, to the main traffic arteries. The Soviet soldiers are still searching for a successful way to counter the conventional guerilla warfare of the insurgents. The tactics of punitive expeditions, using combat helicopters, tanks and artillery, have proven useless in the final analysis. As soon as the Afghan and Soviet troop units move out of a "sanitized" region, it is

encouraged by the freedom fighters who had sought refuge from superior forces in the mountains. And the army is apparently unable to deal with limited, ever better planned surprise attacks by the rebels against public facilities, military camps or individuals closely linked to the regime.

Eyewitness reports indicate that the Afghan freedom fighters are today significantly better equipped with weapons and ammunition than they were 1 year ago. Only a small portion of the arms appears to come from Pakistan or third countries. Rather, their most important source are Afghan and Soviet military depots and defeated units. In addition, Afghan deserters bring along modern hand guns, while Soviet soldiers have been known to sell ammunition--for cash, hashish or opium. It is said also that in western Afghanistan materiel coming from Iran has been observed, e.g. American jeeps assembled in Iran. The rebel groups are still plagued by a lack of artillery and weapons designed to eliminate tanks and, especially, combat helicopters. But recent news from Washington indicate that the Reagan administration is considering furnishing efficient weapon systems. Improved equipment is accompanied by improved combat morale. The freedom fighters have made massive gains in selfconfidence and determination, while their Soviet opponent is increasingly proving vulnerable and his highly sophisticated combat equipment is looking much less effective than was originally thought. And the many deserting Afghan officers and soldiers (the demoralized and unreliable army is thought to have shrunk to about 25 percent of its former strength) have brought useful military know-how with them.

9273
CSO: 4403/51

'ABDORRAHMAN QASEMLU CHALLENGES ROULEAU ARTICLES ON KURDS

Paris LE MONDE in French 22 Apr 81 p 7

[Article by 'Abdorrahman Qasemlu, secretary general of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran: "The Kurdish Conflict and Iran"]

[Text] Following the publication in LE MONDE, on 12 and 13 December, of a series of two articles by Eric Rouleau, entitled "The Secret War of Kurdistan," Mr 'Abdorrahman Qasemlu, secretary general of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran [PDKI] -- one of the nationalist groups of Kurdistan -- sent us the following clarification.

I would like to note that certain remarks attributed to me in the article of 12 December, specifically on Iraq and on Mr Bakhtiar, do not correspond to those which were actually made by me. It would suffice to go back to my interviews which appeared in other organs of the French press, specifically the one published in LIBERATION on 12 and 13 December, to note the manner in which your contributor has distorted my statements by "summarizing" them. Mr Rouleau appears to give credit to the government thesis concerning the "treason of the Kurds." Thus, he implied in his comments and his "observations," that there is a kind of distribution of tasks between the Kurdish movement and the Iraqi government to destroy the Islamic republic. Now, it is public knowledge that the "holy war against the Kurdish infidels" was triggered in August 1979 -- or more than a year before the Iraqi-Iranian conflict -- by an order from Khomeyni, and that in November 1979, in spite of the massacres and destruction inflicted on our people, we accepted the offers of negotiation from the Iranian government at a time when the latter found itself in a bad situation.

Your contributor must know that Mr Bani-Sadr and the religious leaders have responded to our proposals with several unequivocal declarations: they reject as a whole the claims of the Kurdish people; they refuse any negotiations and any agreement with us and they proclaim their determination to "pacify and clean up Kurdistan" and to disarm its population. When one knows that in certain villages, such as Qarneh and Indergash, this "pacification" was translated into total extermination of the defenseless inhabitants, including the religious leaders and the children who had taken refuge in the mosques, one will understand why we chose to resist.

Since March 1980, 30,000 soldiers -- not to mention the militiamen, whose number runs into tens of thousands -- have been at war against a people "guilty" of claiming its freedom and its right to an autonomous existence.

Resist in order to defend our existence or capitulate by laying down arms and leaving the field open to the massacre of the Kurdish population -- which is unfortunate enough not to be Persian and, in addition, to be a largely Sunni majority in Khomeini's Iran --, such was the choice which was offered to us last spring, and such is still the choice at the present time. But we have said it and we repeat it: the Kurdish problem in Iran does not have a military solution; it must be settled by peaceful means.

At a time when populations of a few tens of thousands of inhabitants have gained their independence, I do not believe that the 6 million Kurds of Iran are committing a crime by claiming the right to have schools and publications in the Kurdish language, the right to elect a regional council in charge of managing local administrative, economic and cultural affairs, without calling into question the territorial integrity of the Republic of Iran and without challenging the exclusive authority of the central government in essential matters: national defense, the issuing of currency, customs, foreign affairs and long term planning.

Mr Bouleau stated that "the Peshmergas often take by storm the localities which have just been bombed by the Iraqi air force." However, he would be hard put to cite the name of a single locality, of a single village where this would have been the case.

He also wrote that prior to the launching of this war, the Iranian press published my statements in abundance. Now, everyone knows that since the start of the second Kurdistan war there has been complete censorship, in the press and on radio and television, of the declarations made by the PDKI and its leaders. Likewise, Mr Bouleau seems to want to convince his readers that all political groups in Iran have taken a position against the Kurdish movement. In reality, this only applies to the leaders of the Tudeh party and the pro-Tudeh leaders of one of the Fedayin factions, which has lost its influence in Kurdistan and has become a minority among the Fedayin in the other regions of Iran.

On 1 October 1980 we did not present the government with an ultimatum, enjoining it to withdraw its troops, as was written in the 13 December issue of LE MONDE. We proclaimed, in Persian and Kurdish broadcasts on our radio, that we were ready to go into battle at the side of the Iranian army against the Iraqi aggression if the government were to accept the six point autonomy project proposed by the PDKI and if it were to withdraw the Pasdars, who in Kurdistan are considered to be the warmongers.

It was undoubtedly by mistake that your contributor attributed the post of former first secretary of the PDKI to Mr Bulurian, a post which he never held. Completely isolated in Kurdistan because of the positions he has taken, Mr Bulurian had to seek refuge in Tehran, where he is living semi-clandestinely.

In the same article, Mr Bouleau reproduced assertions according to which I am supposed to have received "millions of dollars" from NATO, to have met with Shahpur Bakhtiar and Taha Yassin Ramadan, the vice president of Iraq, to have received arms from Iraq, etcetera. At the time we denied all these allegations which, in the Iranian context, may undoubtedly be good tactics, but which are completely groundless. I do not at all challenge your contributor's right to cite whomever he wants to, but I do wonder how he could have published such slanderous information about us without asking to see the "documents" those he was speaking with claimed to have in their possession, and without worrying about their authenticity or even their existence.

Finally, I would like to note that, at a time when I was on an information tour in Europe, certain Iranian newspapers, quoting Mr Hashemi, vice governor of the province of Western Azerbaijan, announced that I had just met with the Iraqi minister of defense, together with Sheik Hussein. LE MONDE, in its issue of 1 January 1981, published this information. Now, on 3 January, even before I had a chance to publish a denial to this new element in the brainwashing campaign being conducted against the Kurdish resistance, Mr Hashemi himself denied in the Iranian press that he made any such statements. Unless I am mistaken, LE MONDE did not publish this denial.

Comments by Eric Rouleau

The tape recording of Mr Qasemlu's statements to LE MONDE vouches for the fact that they were not distorted. The documents which implicate him -- letters, which he admits were written by him, relating to his relationship with the Iraqi government -- have been widely reproduced in the press, in the form of photocopies, but it is true that he challenges their interpretation. On the other hand, to report -- as we have done -- the reproaches and accusations leveled by various groups or personalities, Iranian or Kurdish, against the secretary general of the PDKI, is to provide information which does not strike a blow at the struggle of the Kurdish people for its national rights, which besides it would be futile to confuse with either the behavior or the politics of Mr Qasemlu. We will leave full responsibility to Mr Qasemlu for the very personal version he has given of the development of the conflict, which many people will judge to be Manichaean in certain respects, and inaccurate in others.

8463
CSO: 4900/27

BOOK PRESENTING SADDAM HUSAYN'S VIEWS REVIEWED

Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 26 Feb 81 p 3

[Review by 'Awwad 'Ali of the book "Ba'th Theory and the Nation's Pan-Arab Reality" by President Saddam Husayn]

[Text] With his ideological clarity, his profound analysis of many of the intellectual and political issues on which the socialist Arab Ba'th theory is based or issues which are projected on the pan-Arab and international arena and with that flowing style to which we have been accustomed in his interviews and speeches on various occasions, leader President Saddam Husayn answers in the book "The Ba'th Theory and the Nation's Pan-Arab Reality" a number of questions addressed to him by author and journalist Amir Iskandar in an interview conducted on 13 May 1980. We will try here to find the central concepts which his excellency the president underlines as basic assumptions reflecting the party's ideology and practical applications to deal with all the issues and cases facing the Ba'thists and the Arab revolutionary intellectuals in their persistent efforts.

Special Pan-Arab Identity of Ba'th Program

Regarding the special pan-Arab identity of the Ba'th course--a characteristic to which the president's adherence represents one of the features of the president's theoretical and applied thinking--the president says: "When we speak or believe in particularism we do not believe in isolation [al-inghilaq] but rather that our creed takes the color of the vessel in which it was originally founded, and from which it has filtered. This vessel is the Arab society. We do not call for isolation and we do not deny the interchange of our nation's thought with the human thought, or its positive role on our nation. Consequently, our particularism does not only lie in the means, forms and expression, but also in the premises and the conceptual framework. When we stress our particularism in the means, forms, expression, thought and conceptual framework, the presence of the positive role of the interaction with human experiences is a basis of our thinking and our visualization. When we stress this particularism, we are always eager in our relations to better familiarize ourselves with the experiences, thought and history of other peoples." There is no doubt that the essential point made by his excellency the president is that the particular character of the genuine experience does not emanate from its pure nationalism, i.e., the nation's distinct experience, but originates from its local environment, and its serious interaction

with the experiences of other nationalistic, societies. As the Arab nation has, with its civilization and its human and spiritual role, performed the richest roles in the service of mankind, as did other nations towards this nation through the process of interaction, and the transfer of positive characteristics and qualities which this nation has subsequently stamped with its special national character.

Social Struggle in Arab Society

In relation to the particularism of the social and class struggle in the Arab society generally, and in the Iraqi society in particular, his excellency the president asserted "Often, the struggle is determined by the nature of the tasks facing a nation during its total historical phase--tasks created by numerous objective and historical factors. Therefore, the nation's current struggle is a pan-Arab and social struggle because the nation is divided, and because it is the target of efforts that want to keep it divided and colonized. At the same time, the forces that seek to colonize or control the nation want their exploitative supporters within the nation to continue their endeavors, keeping in mind that the interests and aspirations of these supporters are in conflict with the interests and aspirations of the majority of the sons of this nation."

This accurate analysis of the Arab reality sheds light on the particularism of the social and class struggle and makes us realize the degree of difference between this struggle and the class struggle in the societies that do not suffer from the problem of partition and colonization. Consequently, this analysis explains to us the organic link between unity, freedom and socialism and exposes the major flaw in the programs of some political movements in the Arab homeland--movements that focus solely on the class struggle and ignore the national struggle and the reality of division.

Our Position vis-a-vis Lineage and Modernism

So, how does the party view the issue of lineage and modernism and what is the practical way to solve the dilemma created by the ideology of the traditionalists who call for a return to the past, and the ideology of the westernizers which calls for severing all links with the roots?

In the course of his interview, his excellency the president asserted: "Abandoning the past is tantamount to a superficial clinging to modernism and to a formal affiliation with it. Abandoning the progressive present and its laws and requirements is tantamount to a superficial, not human and revolutionary, affiliation with the past."

His excellency discloses the party's revolutionary position vis-a-vis lineage and modernism as a revival of the spirit of the past and not a reversal to the past. This means that our action and visualization should move forward while the spirit of the past is present to help, not obstruct, this progress. All this takes place in the spirit of the requirements of the new life which cannot be but mobile and developing and in which no man can be significant unless he is active in pushing this life forward. "So, we have also to realize that our forefathers were affiliated in a revolutionary manner with their present, which

has now become a past, at the same time in which their present was affiliated with them in a revolutionary manner because their present was moving forward by virtue of the values and the actions in which they engaged to change their reality accordingly."

As for the revolutionary position vis-a-vis modernism, it must, as the president says, be projected through understanding the following issue: All of the forms of current modernism which attract a superficial affiliation by some people are part of the history of other nations whose movement has not been isolated from the age reflected in their action and their visualization and are forms that are linked vitally to the past of these nations. Therefore, adopting the manifestations and appearances of such modernism cause us to lose our sound affiliation with our nation. We will then be affiliated with the present in a superficial, deficient, inhuman and unrevolutionary manner.

Thus, the alternative position endorsed by the party evolves from examining the concepts of modern western civilization so that we may understand and interact with what is meaningful in it. This position is not based on a superficial relation, otherwise we would be in reality in a vacuum, i.e., not resembling ourselves or others. If such is the case we would be unrevolutionary in our action and vision, because we will not be adding anything creative to life and our role will be confined to the automatic transfer and shifting of the experiences and visions of other peoples.

Socialism Is the State of Being of New Man

In his talk on socialism, the president focuses on man who constitutes the basic goal for the party's socialist program. All the formulas and concepts on which the socialist structure is founded seek to create the proper atmosphere for man to make him feel and act happy. The party's approach to socialism is not just a corrective course, a rebellion against the backward and exploitative economic relations or a matter of filling appetites but the new state of man and satisfying his material and spiritual needs. The party considers a happy man the one not only with a satisfied appetite and who is content with his sustenance; rather he should feel a part of a society he wishes to belong to, a happy man capable of offering in their profoundest and most comprehensive sense and form innovation and human giving in its most beautiful meaning and form. So long as the goal of socialism is so deep and comprehensive, the forms of socialist application reached by the revolution are not the ultimate state. The measures, forms and steps followed in practice will be reexamined from time to time. But what is constant is that all this will proceed in the direction of preventing exploitation in society, of not allowing owners to have a social and political status favoring them over or putting them above the other citizens. Moreover, it will not permit ownership to have a power influencing the people's authority and representatives through influencing the state's and the society's organizations, and in the direction of having all this lead to the true happiness of the people.

Independence is Matter of Will Fundamentally

The interviewer then wonders if technology can be neutral and his excellency the president replies: Technology generally is not without political identity. Even

when the advanced countries export their technology to other countries, they act in this regard on the basis of political motives, in addition to other motives, including transfer of the exporting countries' political and social identity to the importing countries.

Therefore, not all countries are able to import technology without the conditions attached to them. For any country to import technology on its own terms, it must possess three fundamental factors: First, this country's possession of a firm and independent political will; second, its possession of high economic capabilities that make the foreigner a contractor working for such a country and not a guardian over it; third, the availability of a national cadre capable of absorbing the technology transferred to the country without large-scale participation by foreigners on their own terms--a participation that puts the country at the mercy of the foreigners insofar as channelling and controlling the use of the technology is concerned, not to mention other risks. All these factors are present in Iraq, and this is why we are confident that the socio-political identity of the western technology will not be transferred to our country to cause serious dangers to our march and our society. The result of this is that we have, with our political will, our economic resources and our technical capability, which has developed throughout the past 12 years, come to use the western technology and not be used by it.

Arab Unity Is a Human Condition

His excellency the president then brings up a number of issues concerning the future of the unity efforts in the short, medium and long run, and we can conclude from his projection the following basic ideas which reflect the party's principled visions concerning the sphere of the action for unity:

For unity to be realized, it requires high-level action--not just high-level technical action but also a high-level revolutionary, struggle and sacrificial action. Rather, this action is tantamount to a process of rising without thought and deed to the human and national level actually required by unity.

A distinction must be made between two states: The state of unity that we struggle for in its relatively final phase and the state of action on the path of unity, i.e., action to achieve unity and preceding its realization, including the action to provide the requirements for the material and moral crystallization of this unity.

The call for Arab unity is not an abstract principle or call for reviving the historical constitutional condition under which the Arabs lived in ancient times. This call is tantamount to a new qualitative state of being, and a state of defending the nation and of confronting the dangers actually facing it at pr t and the dangers facing it in the long run. Therefore, the more numerous the dangers facing the nation become and the more intense they turn, the more urgent becomes the demand for union among the nation's divided parts.

The economy's role is a fundamental role in the process of unification and of channelling the national and pan-Arab interests in the direction of serving or obstructing unification. If we view the economic resources from a local regional angle, unity becomes remote. But if we view them from a principled pan-Arab

angle as a means of rising from the commonplace in life to a higher level in our vision of the nation, of its human role and of its pan-Arab role, then the growth of the economic resources in one or more Arab countries that believe in unity will turn these resources into a means for building the model structure, and for strengthening the unionist relations into an effective weapon in serving and strengthening independence and unification.

The thing whose dangers we must avoid is not to allow a class struggle to erupt completely between one Arab country and another. To avoid such dangers, the poor Arabs must have a chance and a share. It is the duty of the capable Arabs to provide this chance and this share to the others.

The final result that we see in the horizon is that the nation must be united because the question of unification is not a technical or a circumstancial need of the nation, but a historical need based on principled historical and objective reasons. This historical need is not tied to a temporary solution, time or date but to the role that the nation wants to perform at the human level and the role that it wants to assume at the pan-Arab level, and to the condition under which this nation is protected against the covetous. Such role and condition can only be achieved through Arab unity.

The form of Arab unity is not an issue tied statically to one form rather than another. It is a human state and must, therefore, be an ever-developing state, both in action and in outlook.

Arab unity is not a state under which the special national and local characteristics are totally nullified. Rather, it is a state which creates new common characteristics and new bonds for the nation which constitute the basic structure. Everything else will serve the basis or, at least, will not be in conflict with it.

Communist Party Has Ended Up Outside the Front, March and People

What did the Iraqi Communist Party want from its presence within the Progressive National and Pan-Arab Front? What are the consequences of the party's ending up outside the front insofar as the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party's relations with the other communist parties are concerned?

Starting with the front, the president says: "When we said that our view of the front is a strategic view, we did not mean that the front with its constituent parties would continue forever with an absolute guarantee that we issue. Rather, we have said and would like to repeat that we must all view the frontal relations in a strategic range and inclination. The basis of this vision is that our party, which detonated the revolution by itself, and which has proven through its action a superior capability and its indisputable competence to assume the leading role. But the communist party wanted the frontal relations to be a temporary condition leading to a certain point where it becomes the leader of the march, and where the others, including our party, will become followers at best, not to say prisoners in the abysses of jails and victims hanging from gallows. When the communist party realized finally that this state is impossible and unpermissible, it committed another mistake instead of correcting its faulty intellectual and

theoretical (slogan) concerning our people and our party. Furthermore, it committed another mistake when it thought that this was the right time, in terms of timing and of technical capabilities, to embark on a conflict and a confrontation with the Socialist Arab Ba'th Party. This is why the communist party has ended up outside the front, the march and the people.

As to whether this has affected our party's relations with the other communist parties, it is obvious that the basic positions of the party vis-a-vis any milieu, be it Arab or foreign, are not the result of transient and circumstancial reactions, but emanate from ideological visualizations of the Arab reality and its special characteristic, and the nature and characteristics of world communities. This is why his excellency the president asserts: "We are happy whenever we find the Arab communist parties increasing their ties to the local and pan-Arab social life, and we are unhappy whenever we find them moving away in their relationship from the pan-Arab framework, and the aspirations and interests of the Arab popular masses. It is natural for us to encourage the first pattern and to thwart the second. This is not a secret in our policy and our course, but a human condition and the state of any man with a national and pan-Arab responsibility toward the people and toward the nation."

As for the [Ba'th] party's view of the international communist parties, it is certainly different. Every nation is free to choose communism and Leninist Marxism and no nation is viewed with suspicion for making such a choice, as long as it is within its national characteristic.

Democracy Cannot Be Tested in Closed Laboratory or in Shrine of Abstract Contemplation

His excellency defines the party's concept of democracy as being "a human state, like socialism. We cannot assume that any of its experiences or formulas can be conducted in a closed laboratory, or in the shrine of abstract contemplation. Because in this case it cannot be deepened without losing the warmth, humanity and significance of its interaction with life in its spirit and ever-present vitality and its relationship with man its most important element. At the same time, democracy must be generally tied to the special characteristic of the complete theory of those who adopt democracy."

Regarding the democratic experience of the people in the nominations for the National Council and in the elections which took part in the entire country to elect the council members, his excellency the president said: "The democracy we apply now reflects our complete theory of man, life and of the pan-Arab and national struggle with its circumstances and its capabilities. But at the same time, our democratic experience interact in its formulas with human experiences.

This Is How We See World

His excellency the president then presented several concepts concerning existing and future international relations:

The president believes that no essential change will occur in the next 20 years to fault his visualization of the world, regardless of any developments in Chinese/Soviet or Soviet/East Europe relations.

Regarding Japan's relations with the United States, the Japanese can become independent of the United States any time they find it in their interest to do so. However, the fundamental issue in Japan's relationship with the United States is determined by two factors: The ghost of World War II which still haunts the Japanese, and makes them imagine that Japan's resumption of an international policy outside the framework of the present relations, or relations close to the present ones, with Europe and the United States will lead to war and confrontation. The second factor is the treaties resulting from the war itself. The Americans view these treaties as a commitment which Japan must respect. The Japanese also view them, within the framework of their realistic policy under the current international situation, as a commitment that must be respected in order to benefit from the U.S. nuclear umbrella, in addition to other considerations, most of which are not known.

There are people within the Nonaligned Movement who are alined with this or that international party due to the weakness of their political will.

The presence of numerous world powers does not abolish the intentions of the United States to dominate, but reduces the chances of such domination. The state of domination is present in the ancient political history and is not confined to the current international political situation. It is a condition that has existed in the world since states came into existence. The presence of just two powers and two leaders of the two powers makes the chances of the distribution of the spheres of influence and the chances of domination greater than when the centers of polarization are more than just these two powers.

8494
CSO: 4802/555

NEW AUTOMOBILE, ELECTRICITY PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 18 Apr 81 p 58

/Article: "Iraq Is Moving the War to the Technology and Development Front"/

/Text/ The Iraqi authorities concerned are giving special attention to the project to establish an industrial complex for manufacturing vehicles and land transport equipment in Iraq; at present it may be the most prominent of all the concerns these authorities are showing for development projects.

The special attention this project enjoys may be attributed to the technical nature of the project. Iraq wants it not to be just a plant for collecting and assembling automobile equipment manufactured abroad but rather to be a real factory by which Iraq can start the process of producing some automotive parts and elements and broaden its entry into manufacturing. Thus not just an automobile industry will be established through the plant, but also a developed industrial base helping to transfer technology to Iraq and create an Iraqi technological complex which, through the plant, will be reflected in other industrial and productive sectors in Iraq.

From this standpoint, the Iraqi authorities concerned with the project are preoccupied with the process of the technical study of the project whose presentation has been assigned to a group of German firms headed by the Fifli company, with the participation of the Integral and Kuhl Becker companies. These will perform the technical studies and set out a book of conditions governing the award of the plant construction, a discussion, analysis and comparison of bids over a number of stages, and supervision of the project construction, which is estimated to take a period of no less than 3 years after it is started. It is to be designed with a total productive capacity of 150,000 vehicles per year, which can be increased to 250,000 vehicles in subsequent stages; its output will consist of various tour vehicles, pick ups and trucks.

Costs of this study total 18 million Iraqi dinars--that is, according to the official exchange rate of the dinar, more than US $61 million. Total project costs are currently estimated at 2.5 billion dinars (US $8.5 billion). It is expected that presentation of the preliminary study will be completed at the end of this year and that the book of conditions will be prepared, and the awards made, before the end of 1982, when construction is expected to start.

Construction of the project in the area where it is to be built will be accompanied by projects to establish complete facilities in the form of roads, sewers, water facilities, electricity, schools, administrative offices, government buildings and housing for a new city to accommodate about 300,000 people and contain all the people working on the project (during construction and after it has been put on production) as well as their families and the families of the government administrative agency people working in the administrative and security facilities to be built in the city.

Acceleration of Construction

At this time, the Iraqi authorities are involved with the process of carrying out some other developmental and construction projects.

In the context of the capital, Baghdad, sources in certain contracting companies operating in Iraq mention that the secretary of the capital, Mr Samir 'Abd-al-Wahhab, held a special meeting with these companies' representatives in which he urged them to hasten construction of the projects assigned to them and take all measures to guarantee that they are completed before their stipulated dates.

The meeting was held between company representatives and the secretary of the Iraqi capital in the last week of March. The companies were informed of Iraq's desire to see many of the projects which have been assigned, and which, according to contract, are expected to be completed at the end of 1982, ready and completed before the middle of next year, because of Iraq's ambition to accelerate construction of its development and construction projects.

Considering that the acceleration of construction requires added efforts, more extensive equipment and more manpower and technicians, and that all that entails additional costs, the representatives of the companies concerned with the matter understand that the Iraqi authorities are prepared not just to bear the added costs but are also prepared to provide specific bonuses to companies which succeed in shortening the construction period. It is well known that the Iraqi authorities have sometimes dealt generously with certain contracting firms by giving them contracts at prices relatively higher than those in the bids of companies competing with them, when the companies with the relatively high prices bound themselves to completing the projects in periods substantially shorter than those offered by the companies with the lower-priced bids.

The companies now concerned with this Iraqi appeal belong to a number of nationalities--Korean, Indian and French--and are on contract for water and sewer projects in the capital, Baghdad. Among them also are a Kuwaiti company (the Contracting and Foreign Trade Company), a Jordanian firm (the International Contracting Company) and a Lebanese one (the Midmak Company) which is constructing a sewer project costing approximately 600 million Lebanese pounds ($150 million).

Meeting the Electricity Shortage

In the context of Iraq as a whole, especially its large towns, one conspicuous matter preoccupying authorities is that of rapidly providing more electric power in order to make more power supplies available, thereby making up for the relative

scarcity which some towns have been suffering from following the decline in supplies resulting from the losses which some electric power generating stations have suffered through the war with Iran. The main dimensions of this issue are as follows:

Considering that repair to the existing generating stations which are now out of operation will take a long time, the Iraqi authorities are trying rapidly to meet the existing shortage by rapidly importing medium- and large-size electric generators. They are also trying to cope with part of the shortage by hastening construction of the generating plant projects.

Iraqi authorities are also accelerating negotiations underway with a competing group of French and Japanese companies on the project to build a generating plant on the Mosul Dam, for which a construction project was assigned to a group of German and Italian companies a short time ago.

11887
CSO: 4802/691

NEW RECOVERY TANK DEVELOPED BY IDF

Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 13 Mar 81 p 3

[Article: "New Recovery Tank for the IDF"]

[Text] [Text above Photograph] New Recovery Tank for the IDF

[Photograph]

The IDF Ordnance Corps, in collaboration with a private Israeli company, has developed a modern recovery tank, and its picture was first published in the weekly BAMAHANEH. The recovery tank, called the "Sherman, Type 3 [or "C"]," was developed from the American Sherman M51 tank which has been in use by the IDF for many years. The tank has a Diesel 460 horsepower engine, and it is operated by a 4-man crew. It weighs 42.5 tons, and it can lift up to 20 tons. According to BAMAHANEH, the recovery tank is the only one of its kind in the world which is equipped with a special device for lifting an engine as part of the recovery. It is also the only one in the world which permits an ideal solution to suitability problems encountered during the changing of an engine in terrain conditions.

5830
CSO: 4805/183

CAPABILITIES OF MERKAVA TANK DESCRIBED

Tel Aviv MA'ARAKHOT HIMUSH in Hebrew Feb 81 pp 6-12

[Article: "Merkava--Visiting Card"]

[Text] The crowning glory of the development activity in the Ordnance Corps is the Merkava tank project. The project began in 1970 when the decision was made to develop an Israeli tank. The planning of the tank was assigned to an engineering team in the headquarters of the Chief Ordnance Officer. Today, on the 10th anniversary of the project, a large number of operational Merkava tanks are in service.

The magnificence of this achievement is evident against the background of two facts: first--similar projects in countries which are leaders in this field, such as the United States or Germany, take from 12 to 15 years, and second--the development of the tank began without a suitable industrial base for its production, and this base had to be developed concurrently. An enormous sum of money was invested in the establishment of civilian enterprises in armor casting, heavy industry, metalworking, electronics, electrooptics, and so forth, and along with all of these--a modern enterprise for planning and the assembly of tanks within the IDF structure.

The capability for deciding on the development of a tank in Israel, and more than that, the capability for implementing the development decision stemmed first and foremost from the experience which the Ordnance Corps had accrued in many years of development, refurbishing, and improvement of tanks acquired by the IDF during the course of time.

A handful of experienced officers assembled from the various branches in the headquarters of the Chief Ordnance Officer formed the nucleus of the special development unit for the Merkava tank. During many hours of brainstorming sessions, meetings, discussions, and symposia, guideline ideas were exchanged until the final set of specifications was finalized. Tens, hundreds, and thousands of sketches began to flow from the drawing boards of the planning teams to the various enterprises. The first models which began to take shape were submitted for intensive tests in the testing unit of the Ordnance Corps. Defects which were discovered were corrected, and the production enterprises were provided with the results. More improved models and more tests, in a repetitive process, led at a certain stage, even before the comprehensive tests were completed, to a decision to enter into a series production of "Merkava-1." At the same time, the planning

teams continued to update the production diagrams and to develop more advanced models of the tank. The main characteristics of tanks are protection, survivability, mobility, and firepower. To achieve these objectives, ideas and solutions, some of which were not routine, were incorporated into the Merkava tank.

Protection and Survivability

Maximum protection for the crew and a high prospect of surviving on the battlefield are the most outstanding and preferred characteristics of the Merkava tank. These characteristics were achieved by a series of ideas, some of which were outstanding innovations in tank design:

Smallest Silhouette in Fire Position

The location of the gun and the structure of the turret permit the achievement of the smallest silhouette in fire position--the smallest of any other tank in the world.

Layered Armor

The entire tank, hull and turret, is built on the principle of layered armor over the entire surface. In certain places, the tank is protected by a special armor.

Use of the Tank Assemblies for Protection of the Crew

The tank assemblies and the various systems, along with their regular functions, are so placed as to play a role in the ballistic protection of the crew. An outstanding and innovative example in the designing of tanks is the placement of the power block in the front of the tank. This arrangement provides maximum protection in the front of the hull.

Location of Ammunition

All the ammunition for the gun is located under the turret ring in order to reduce the danger of a direct hit.

Special Protection for Ammunition Storage Areas

During a fire inside the tank, the heat reaches 1000° Celsius. In such heat there is a danger of an immediate explosion of the ammunition, and the Merkava has special arrangements to prevent such an explosion.

Location of Inflammable Materials

An effort has been made to locate the assemblies containing inflammable materials outside the crew compartment. For example, the power unit of the turret, the oil tanks, and the nitrogen batteries, which are generally located in the firing compartment, were removed and located in the back pocket outside the compartment.

Atomic, Biological, and Chemical Protection

The Merkava tank has a central protection system of the "superpressure" type in the event of atomic, biological, or chemical warfare. This system permits the crew to stay in the closed tank without donning masks and to continue to fight.

Mobility

The emphasis in the design in this area was placed on achieving maximum speed in the field, a capability to climb inclines, a capability to accelerate, and maximum comfort for the crew during movement.

Engine

The Merkava engine is a Continental 900 hp Diesel engine. It has 12 cylinders and is air-cooled. The engine was developed especially for the Merkava on the basis of the engines in the Patton and the improved Centurion tanks.

Transmission

It has an Allison automatic transmission of the type installed in the Patton and improved Centurion tanks. The transmission is a moment-converter type and contains as an inseparable part the steering and braking systems. Several changes have been made in the transmission in order to make it suitable for powers and moments required in the Merkava.

System of Tracks, Springs, and Wheels

The Merkava has six pairs of wheels on three suspension blocks on each side. This apparently is a structure similar to the Bogie system of the Centurion or Chiefta however actually, each pair of wheels is connected to a set of spiral springs in the free suspension system without any connection with the movement of the next pair. In addition, there are four hydraulic brakes (in wheels 1, 2, 5, and 6) and spiral springs as bumpers for the wheel arms. This system and the location of the crew near the tank's center of gravity give the crew maximum comfort and a good feeling while moving over difficult terrain. The track is all metal and built like the "dry" single pin type. The suspension housings are made of ballistic steel which gives the tank hull additional protection.

Operation

Thanks to the increased power unit and the system of tracks, springs, and wheels with superior braking and its high energy absorption capacity, the Merkava can achieve a maximum speed of 40 kilometers per hour in the field (a maximum of 45 kilometers per hour on the road). The tank's acceleration, measured from a standing start to 32 kilometers per hour, is 13 seconds.

Firepower

The Merkava's firepower is based on its armament (main and auxiliary), fire control system, and stabilizer:

Main Armament

A standard 105 mm gun adapted for the Merkava. In terms of the number of rounds, it has a large number compared to other tanks, and this includes all types of ammunition used in the IDF. The ammunition is located under the turret ring and is easily accessible.

Auxiliary Armament

Three MAG machine guns for the gunner, commander, and loader with a large supply of ammunition, personal weapons, grenades, etc.

Fire Control System

The function of a modern fire control system is to permit effective observation and aiming day and night, standing or moving, at stationary or mobile targets, and to increase the chances of hitting the target. The Merkava fire-control system is a modern one with characteristics responsive to these requirements:

Gunner's Sight--The main part of the gunner's sight is an advanced peritelescope which was developed especially for the Merkava. The peritelescope consists of a laser rangefinder which permits extremely accurate aiming and rangefinding. The peritelescope's viewer has a moving crosshair, the location of which is determined by computer commands.

Commander's Sight--This is a panoramic sight which permits 360° span of observation. The enlargement capacity of the sight changes by means of a zoom (change of focus) system and enables the commander to observe and screen the area effectively. The system has a counter-rotation apparatus which turns the top of the sight in a direction opposite the movement of the turret and in this way permits keeping the target in sight until the gun reaches the line of aiming of the sight.

Ballistic Computer--This is an electronic firing computer developed especially for the Merkava.

The computer is fed range data (electrically from the rangefinder or manually), type of ammunition, geometrical data of the turret, location of the sight, side slope of the turret, speed of the target, meteorological data, degree of wear of the gun barrel. On the basis of this data, the computer performs the ballistic computations, and the results of the computation are transmitted to the sight and to the gun and permits accurate fire. In an emergency, when there is a problem in the electrical system or in the computer itself, the computer can be operated with exceptional effectiveness by means of a mechanical range drum installed in it (its principle of operation is similar to the one installed in the Centurion). The computer is operated by the gunner, however the commander also has a separate operator's box which permits the input of range and type of ammunition. The loader also has his own operator's box which permits the input of only the type of ammunition.

Ballistic Propulsion--This is the link which connects the gun, the sight, and the computer. Raising or lowering movements are transmitted from the gun to the

gunner's and commander's sights by the same principle. The ballistic propulsion encompasses also the differential apparatus which receives the ballistic data from the computer mechanically and translates it into a ballistic angle which is the angle between the sights' line of aim and the gun axis.

Thermal Sleeve--Installed on the gun barrel. Its function is to prevent the barrel from moving out of line (its inflection) as a result of temperature differences in its perimeter. The temperature differences are caused by radiation from the sun, wind, and rain. The thermal sleeve which was developed in Israel very effectively prevents the barrel from moving out of line and as such reduces to a minimum chances for one of the main reasons for missing a target.

Headlight--The headlight of the Merkava is installed in the rear of the turret, under the armor and facing upward. When the headlight is turned on, a small panel above it is opened by means of a hydraulic lift, and a mirror is extended above it which aims the beam of light in the direction of the line of fire. Hence, only the mirror which is made of cheap material is vulnerable during the use of the headlight.

Stabilization System--The stabilization system of the Merkava is a modern one developed by the Cadillac-Gage Company in the United States. It is now beginning to be manufactured in Israel.

The stabilization system, which is integrated into the hydraulic system of the turret, consists of gyroscopes, two for traversing and two for elevating. By means of the hydraulic system, the stabilizers move the turret and the gun and maintain their line of aim while the tank is in motion. The results obtained from firing while moving are considered outstanding for systems of this type.

Electrical System

In the electrical systems of the Merkava, special emphasis was placed on simplicity of operation in order to make it easy for the crews to remember the procedures that they must follow. The system of circuits, including automatic circuits, is constructed for natural and simple operation, especially in matters which are known to cause problems in other tanks. The design also took into account lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War.

Main Electrical Assemblies in the Tank:

Alternator--650 amperes, 28.5 volts, cooled by the engine oil. This is the standard alternator in the Patton tank.

Batteries--8 improved NATO batteries, 2 of which are in the turret (to reduce voltage drops) with a total capacitance of 500 ampere-hours.

Driving-Signals System--8 visual and sonic commands. The visual channel is independent.

Gas-Pressure Blower System for Firing the Machine Gun and Gun--High rate of supply [or "discharge"].

Firing of the Gun--Electrical; Emergency firing--Generator

Turret Ring Terminal:

-Voltage Channels and Grounding--Peak load 2500 amperes

-28 Channels for General Use

-9 Channels for Weak (Covered) Signals

Radiation Warning Device--Alerts to dangers of electromagnetic radiation.

Inter-tank Starter Jacks--2 standard jacks in the batteries compartment.

Communications--Up to 2 receiver-transmitters and 4 auxiliary receivers. Can be operated by the forward command group located in the shells compartment.

Personal Ventilators for the Driver, Gunner, and Loader--High rate of supply.

Additional Functions of the Merkava

The location of the power block in the front part of the tank permits the opening of the back hatch and the placement of many ammunition packs in the rear part of the hull. This hatch provides an entrance and exit for the crew in addition to the hatches for the commander, loader, and driver.

Placement of several ammunition packs outside the tank permits the Merkava to be used for the transportation of troops (up to an infantry squad), as a command tank with staff accessories, and as a tank for evacuating wounded.

5830
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SOVIET-PHALANGIST RELATIONS DISCUSSED

Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 30 Mar-5 Apr 81 p 12

[Article by May Kahalah: " 'An Oddness in Relations' Between Moscow and Phalangists; Soldatov Stays Away From al-Jumayyil for 1 Year, Then Returns"]

[Text] "Something odd is tarnishing these relations." The discussion is about relations between Moscow, through its ambassador in Beirut on the one hand, and the Phalangist party on the other. The [foregoing statement] was made by al-Shaykh Pierre al-Jumayyil who met with the Soviet ambassador last week for about 2 hours.

The former Soviet ambassador, Sarvar Azimov had once invited al-Jumayyil for dinner at the embassy where he showered him with praise in front of a gathering of Lebanese and Soviet personalities and praised the national course and method of the Phalangists. Al-Shaykh Pierre was one of those who was most surprised by this. The present ambassador, Alexander Soldatov, however, asked to meet with the president of the Phalangists 1 year after his credentials were received. Soldatov met al-Jumayyil at a luncheon banquet where the two began an "intermittent" dialogue. It was learned that the dialogue between the Soviet ambassador and the commander of the Lebanese forces, al-Shaykh Bashir al-Jumayyil was semi-continuous, and it was said that al-Shaykh Bashir al-Jumayyil met Soldatov more than once and that he had had an exchange of views with him on internal and regional conditions.

The Bridges Have Not Been Burned

It is known that the Phalangists never burned their bridges with Moscow despite the Lebanese events. In June 1977 al-Shaykh Pierre received Mr Aleksander Konstantinovich Kislov, chief of the section for U.S. policy in the Middle East at the Institute of U.S. and Canada in the Soviet Union, at the Phalangist main office in al-Sayfi. Mr Kislov was accompanied by a TASS Agency correspondent. At that time Phalangist sources said, "The dialogue was clear and constructive despite ideological differences."

In June 1980 Soldatov met with [former] President Camille Sham'un in the home of Sham'un's son, Duri. The meeting was attended by al-Shaykh Bashir

al-Jumayyil who was careful that day of keeping [his presence] confidential and not leaking news about his presence at the meeting. It so happened that [former] Prime Minister Rashid al-Sulh was passing through al-Ashrafiyah that day, and he was surprised to find the Soviet ambassador in the "rightist stronghold."

There was also a meeting of some consequence which took place between Deputy al-Shaykh Amin al-Jumayyil and Soviet officials late in 1976.

Thus, despite the position of the Lebanese Communist party and the parties of the National Movement--a position which is opposed to the Phalangist party and advocates boycotting it because according to those parties the Phalangists deal with Israel--it was surprising that Soldatov asked for a meeting with al-Jumayyil and that he came to the main office of the Phalangists in al-Sayfi, which is opposite the commercial markets front, in a motorcade that was led by al-Shaykh Bashir when it entered the eastern district. The commander of the Lebanese forces attended part of the meeting during which one of the employees of the Soviet embassy undertook to interpret the dialogue between the two sides.

Al-Jumayyil: an Oddness in Relations

Al-Shaykh Pierre al-Jumayyil told AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI about the meeting. "The Phalangist party welcomes the dialogue and respects all opinions. With regard to the Soviet Union I find that there is something odd tarnishing relations with it. Soviet ambassadors in Beirut communicate with us and talk with us. Even Agimov became one of our dearest friends; but in some instances the Soviets stop communicating with us and then suddenly they resume their communications.

"The current ambassador, for example, spent more than 1 year [in Beirut] before contacting us and asking for a meeting with me. We met and we had lunch together. Then we had our recent meeting after [some] interruption [in these contacts]. We explained to him that we did not want to quarrel with anybody, especially Syria. I told him that the 1914 war had been fought with guns, that the 1939 war had been fought with airplanes, but that our war was a war of destruction. He was open, and he was not annoyed [by what I said]. I noticed that he showed more interest than he usually does. The truth is that we did not go into detail about what was happening in Lebanon; nor did he convey to us a specific view or a Syrian or a Palestinian position."

It was learned that the meeting which had lasted 2 and a half hours had begun with an exchange of pleasantries. Then the ambassador spoke at length, praising the October Revolution and Soviet interest in social questions. The ambassador praised the 26th Congress of the Soviet Communist party, affirming that the objective of communism was to become the community of man. At that point al-Shaykh Pierre interrupted him to tell him about the current situation in Lebanon. He took him back to 1943 and

of what Lebanon had suffered then. He emphasized that the Phalangist party was attached to the land since the central government had been destroyed three times and then rebuilt despite the fact that it was pursuing a course of solidarization. When Soldatov asked al-Jumayyil why the Lebanese people were not cooperating with each other to control the situation, al-Jumayyil replied, "If you are striving to preserve humanity, help us and ask the parties with whom you have influence to control themselves and to let the Lebanese come to an agreement with other Lebanese." When the ambassador insisted on the need for the Lebanese to come to an agreement, the president of the Phalangist [party] replied, "I am appointing you a fair arbiter; suggest a solution for our question."

The conversation never touched upon relations with Syria, and neither one of the two parties sought to have the other convey suggestions to specific agencies.

Correspondents who covered the meeting noticed that the Soviet ambassador was warmly welcomed and that four military personnel extended to him a military salute. Not a single shot was heard during his presence in al-Sawfar, so four of those accompanying him toured the region and examined the destruction.

Indicators of the Meeting

Phalangist sources thought that the importance of the meeting lay first in the fact that it took place and that it took place at this time in particular. They thought that the meeting was a manifestation of a new Soviet method that was trying to counter--or at least parallel--the U.S.-Phalangist dialogue, which appears to be more positive under the new U.S. administration. This means that the Soviets want to emphasize that they are capable of conducting talks with everybody inside the country despite their ideological differences with the Lebanese Front, which is considered the primary enemy of their allies in Lebanon. It has been said that al-Jumayyil has been invited to visit the Soviet Union, but his response to that invitation is not yet known.

The visit also follows Lebanon's filing of a complaint with the UN Security Council against Israeli attacks on the south, and it comes in the wake of a Soviet position in support of Lebanon and strongly opposed to the United States which refused to accept a resolution condemning Israel.

It is also known that West European countries have been trying for some time to cultivate stable contacts with the Phalangists for the purpose of reconsidering their policy vis a vis the Lebanese question. The recent visit may prove to be advantageous to the Syrian-Phalangist dialogue, thereby providing for the Soviet Union that flexibility is necessary under the present condition so as to make the Americans lose the leverage they have been using against Syria in Lebanon and their continued use of the Phalangist military force to threaten it.

[illegible]

AMAL REORGANIZATION DISCUSSED

Paris AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI in Arabic 9-12 Apr 81 p 17

[Article by 'Ali Hamadah: "The Amal Movement: Trading the New Formula for Renewal?"]

[Text] The disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr in the fall of 1978 had a severe effect on the institutions the imam had established and turned into a political force. In the midst of the acute crises that were threatening Lebanon it was found that complementing these institutions by establishing a military wing [for the movement] was imperative. Thus the Amal Movement, like other similar military political organizations on the Lebanese scene, came into being in the forefront of the events of the seventies.

As a reaction to the disappearance of the imam, his aides and followers doubled their efforts to develop and to strengthen his accomplishments politically and militarily.

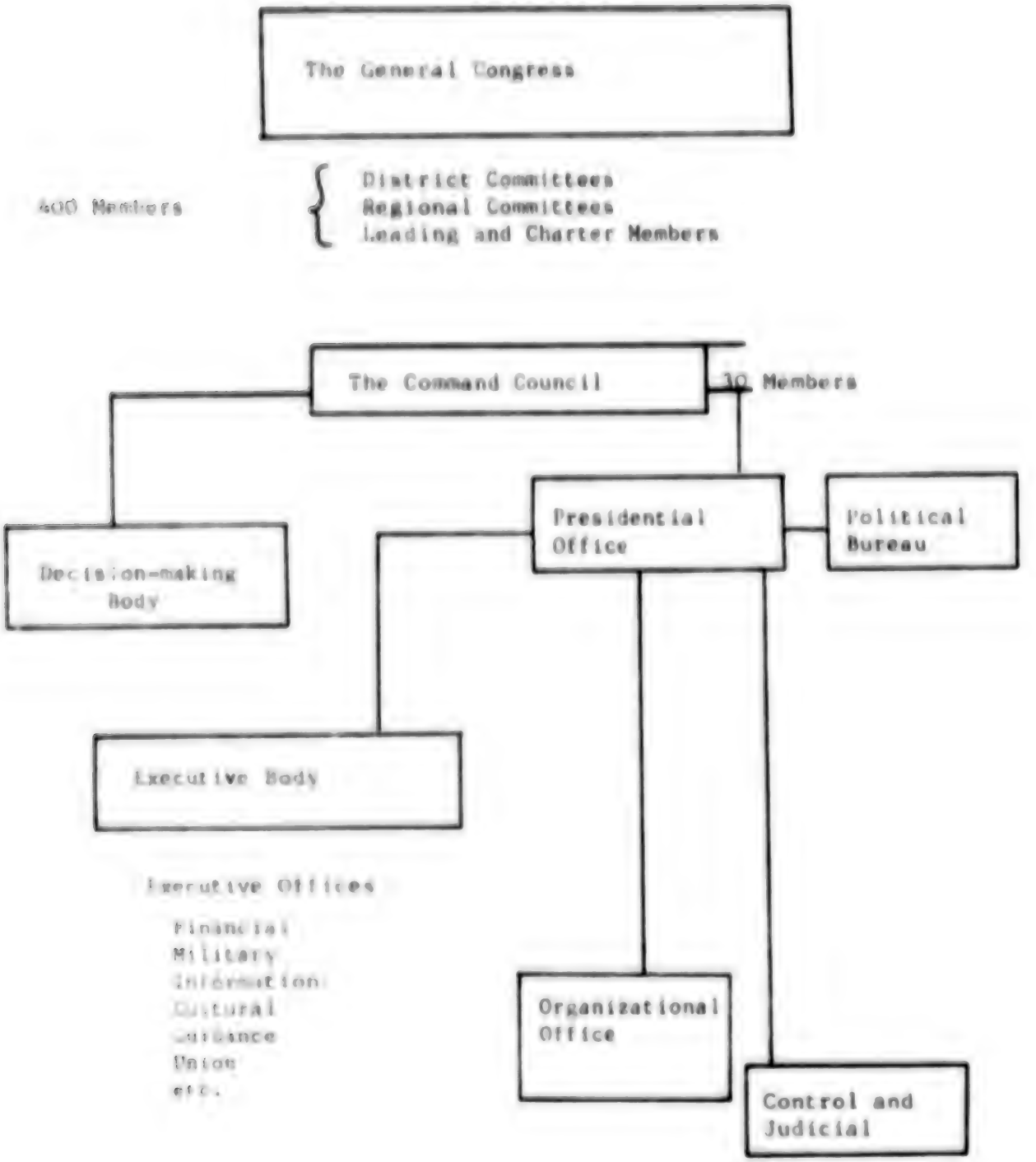
The recent conference of the Amal Movement which was held last March was one of the significant stages in the series of organizational and developmental operations that followed the absence of the imam.

A few people who are knowledgeable about the affairs of Amal are saying that "The growth of the movement after the disappearance of the imam was a reaction to that disappearance. Furthermore, the growth of the movement's military and political capabilities was inevitable to counter the currents that had surrounded the members of the Shi'ite sect, especially in the south, where daily suffering was and still is part of the heritage of the region's residents."

Hence it was inevitable that the movement grow. Material and moral internal and external factors came together to help in this operation: these factors made Amal the basic drawing force for the members of the largest sect in Lebanon in less than 2 years.

It is the opinion of one of the leaders in the movement that the Iranian Revolution became the basic moving force that impelled Amal to draw together all the enthusiasts.

The New Organisational Chart of the Amal Movement



Despite that, the recent convention that was held to approve an alternative organizational formula and to elect a leadership council took place in the midst of an abundance of rumors.

Some of those rumors stated that the inflexible Iranian wing in the movement scored a victory over the moderate Lebanese wing and that this is proven by the departure of Mr Ahmad Isma'il from the command council. Some are stating that it was the supporters of the Iraqi al-Da'wah party in the movement who ran the convention and stirred it from the foundation. Some said that had it not been for the severity of foreign pressures, none of those who won membership in the new command council would have won [their positions]. [They sai] that approval of a new formula was the price which the inflexible groups in the movement got to retain a specific formula for the new command council which no longer has the decision-making and executive mandatory powers that it had before.

All this talk comes in the course of news that had been leaked from the convention about the violence of the verbal exchanges that reached the point of defaming and attacking leading members in a manner that had not occurred before.

"And thus," says one of the members of the elected command council, "on the basis of the principle of development for the purpose of reinforcement to have the organizations focus on democratic principles that would assure them of a proper balance by expanding the representation of the foundation and defining the most precise responsibilities, amendments were introduced into the bylaws in the light of the command council's exercise of its mandatory powers in decision-making and execution."

In light of this trend in development and the news that was leaked from the convention it may be said that the discussions which lasted 3 continuous days focused on what was being done in the command. These discussions showed:

1. The decision making foundation was narrow and confined to a small number of officials.

2. There were gaps in the decision-making and execution [processes] that would cause political and military problems.

3. There was no control and accountability mechanism to follow up on political or military action from the decision-making level to that of execution.

4. Reactions outnumbered actions in the movement's actions, and this made the organization lose the advantage of taking the initiative.

"All these gaps," the narrator asserts, "forced the correction of organizational conditions by establishing a group command that respected the principle of defining responsibilities and separating powers. It is for this reason that the new formula, which was approved by the convention, was set

up. This formula did not eliminate the following frameworks, as some senior figures had wished it would.

1. A 10-member command council elected by the general congress. This is the supreme legislative agency in the movement; it is tantamount to a representative of the general congress, and it stems from it.

2. The decision-making body, which makes the decisions and is made up of 7 members.

3. A presidential office which is made up of [the following]:

1. The chairman of the command council, chairman.
2. The chairman of the executive body, vice chairman.
3. The director of the political bureau, second vice president.
4. The director of the organizational office, member.
5. The director of the control and judicial office, member.

4. The executive body which is made up of the chairman and the directors of 11 executive offices.

5. The political bureau which includes nine members. This is the body that makes the preparations for the decisions. It is concerned with planning and finding alternatives after evaluating the data and the information.

8592
CSO: 4802/689

SOVIET ACADEMICIANS EXPRESS VIEWS ON LEBANESE FEDERATION

Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 12 Mar 81 pp 1, 12

[Article by Mustafa al-Husayni: "AL-SAFIR Dispatch from Moscow: The Soviets and the Lebanese Crisis: The Unity of Lebanon Will Survive Even Through a Sectarian Federation; 'An Alliance with Syria and with the Palestinians Is the Condition for Independence' "]

[Text] The Soviets think that there is a fixed balance of power in Lebanon now between the various factional parties, but they also think that this fixed balance will not last long and that it could collapse soon. They think that this collapse may be brought about by the rightist forces in the country which want the unity of Lebanon, but they want that unity to be under their control.

What is upholding this stability is the fact that at the present time these rightist forces do not have the capability of changing the fixed balance of powers. Likewise, it is the judgment of the Soviets that this stability may collapse by means of a direct political-military agreement between the Lebanese rightist forces and Israel. But the Soviets also believe that this possibility is not imminent within the short range.

These views were expressed by two senior academicians who work at the Institute of Eastern Studies in Moscow. They are the specialist in the economics of oil, Andreasyan, and the specialist in Lebanese history, Gorbunova.

The significance of the Institute of Eastern Studies lies in the fact that it is considered the most notable "assembly of Soviet thought" on the affairs of the east.

The two Soviet academicians presented their views on Lebanon in an expanded debate on the Near East. This is the Soviet term for what the West calls the Middle East.

Andreasyan chose to begin the discussion on the Near East by analyzing the Lebanese crisis which he attributed--in its current form or in its

current role--to the "Israeli aggression on the Arabs." The 1958 civil war had erupted around Lebanon's position on the Egyptian-Syrian unity which had been one of the forms of the Arab confrontation [effort] of the Israeli aggression. The 1975 war broke out as a result of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon or as an indirect result of that presence. "Rightist Christian leaders feared that the Palestinian presence and the Palestinian alliance with the Lebanese National Movement could upset the Lebanese balance wherein these forces had the position of the strongest parties, if not that of the controlling party."

Accordingly, Andreasyan does not think there can be a solution to the Lebanese crisis without a solution to the problem of Israeli aggression on the Arabs. He thinks so without ignoring the fact that there is a primary Lebanese crisis manifested in the sectarian formula whose imbalance parallels the social imbalance [in the country]. However, Andreasyan thinks that without the Israeli aggression, which created the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, the primary Lebanese crisis would lose its explosive factors and would find its way to a solution through the economic and social development of the country.

Andreasyan thinks that according to the analysis [of the situation], there can be no final and complete solution to the Lebanese crisis unless the problem of Israeli aggression is solved, even though a partial or an interim solution is possible if a formula were found that would nullify the argument of the rightist Christian leaders' fears. This argument states that the Palestinian presence [in Lebanon] is upsetting the balances of the Lebanese formula.

It is the opinion of Andreasyan that the achievement of a solution is being thwarted by the fact that "the alliance of al-Jumayyil, Sham'un and Sa'd Haddad is directly related to Israel."

Dr Gorbunova states that while she concurs with Andreasyan's opinion regarding the fact that the Lebanese Christian leaders want the unity of Lebanon under their control, partition remains imminent because of the connection between the rightist alliance and Israel and because Israel does not want the unity of Lebanon.

Gorbunova thinks that the delicacy of the Lebanese crisis is also derived from the fact that "all the problems of the Near East have become centered in Lebanon." She says that the official Soviet policy on the Lebanese crisis has been proclaimed and is well-known. This policy supports all the proposals that could possibly lead to the stability of conditions and the unification of Lebanon.

Ann Sara Andreasyan interposes that the factors of preserving the unity of Lebanon are present and strong. Among those factors--despite the negative nature of this factor--is the fact that the Christian bourgeoisie wants to control all of Lebanon, not just part of it. This bourgeoisie knows that it is an intermediary bourgeoisie that cannot live without

the Arabs. If partition is realized, it will be difficult for the Arabs to deal with this Christian bourgeoisie. Also among these factors [of preserving the unity of Lebanon] is the fact that despite "the divided status quo" that exists now, economic relations between the parts of Lebanon are continuing and are quite brisk.

Gorbunova adds, "The existing balance can be preserved and strengthened. This balance encompasses opportunities for agreement among all the parties. Similarly, the proposal of the Broad National Front which is currently pending on the scene of Lebanese politics, may constitute the introduction to a solution to the problem of Lebanon's unity, provided that all the parties realize that the establishment of this front is merely the first step--even though it is the more important step--and if this front is set up on the basis of being an agreement between all the parties."

Gorbunova adds that all the progressive powers in Lebanon have the capability of opposing the plan of the rightist forces by one means, and that is the road of "realism."

Andreasyan interposes, as though to explain what was meant by realism and says, "The Lebanese bourgeoisie undoubtedly realizes that Lebanon has lost its old role, that is, the role of [serving] as the financial center for the oil [exporting] Arabs and the role of intermediary between those Arabs and the West. In the Gulf area Kuwait and Bahrain have set up their own financial centers. The oil [exporting] Arabs are also now dealing directly with the West without the mediation of the Lebanese bourgeoisie. There is no doubt that this bourgeoisie consequently realizes that its importance to the Arabs has diminished."

Andreasyan adds that on the basis of this analysis, it is inevitable for this bourgeoisie "to preserve the unity of Lebanon and to establish a central authority. In this context a local authority can be established in every region, and it is possible for the country to become a federation or a sectarian confederation."

Andreasyan goes on to add, "However, every such formula has its basic conditions which may not be subject to concession: foreign policy and defense for the central government. The central government adheres to the Arab position against Israel and against Camp David, and it adheres to friendly relations and an alliance with Syria and with the Palestinians.

Gorbunova concludes the discussion by saying, "Lebanon has two principal problems: unity and independence. The problem of unity can be solved because there are many factors--some of them are conflicting--working to affirm the unity of Lebanon, perhaps under different formulas. But the problem of independence can be solved by having the central government adhere to a policy of hostility to the Israeli aggression and to Camp David and to a policy of alliance with Syria and with the Palestinians."

8592
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SEVERAL AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED WITH CYPRUS

Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 21 Mar 81 p 33

[Article by Khazin 'Abud: "Libyan-Cypriot Relations Face Roadblock of 'Voice of the Arabs' From Cyprus"]

[Text] Cyprus and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah are both awaiting the implementation of several agreements which have been concluded between the two countries. Some of these agreements, including the agreement pertaining to agriculture, have not been put into effect while the labor agreement has been implemented completely. Moreover, some provisions of the information and civil aviation agreements have not been carried through. During April, Libyan Airlines will begin making scheduled flights between Tripoli and Larnaca.

AL-MUSTAQBAL asked the secretary of the Libyan People's Office, Dr 'Abdallah al-Zubaydi, about the fate of the agreements concluded between Libya and Cyprus. He said: "Relations between Cyprus and the jamahiriyah are good, but there are a number of provisions in the agreements concluded between the two countries--some of which were signed as long ago as 1973--that are still awaiting implementation. Negotiations are continuing in an effort to put them into effect." He added: "For example, Cypriot Minister of Labor Stavrinakis will soon pay an official visit to the jamahiriyah to conduct talks on these agreements. The Libyan People's Office in Nicosia is presently involved in making arrangements to open a Libyan Cultural Center. A building has been purchased for this purpose in the middle of the capital. The Cultural Office will include a library and reading room and its programs will include the presentation of educational, cultural and documentary films as well as lectures. In addition, the jamahiriyah has opened a Libyan school to teach Arabic free of charge to Arab citizens on the island as well as to any Cypriot citizens who wish to learn Arabic." Dr al-Zubaydi said that the opening of the cultural center will contribute substantially to the advancement of relations and ties of friendship between the two peop'es in the jamahiriyah and Cyprus as well as furthering other aspects of relations.

However, AL-MUSTAQBAL has learned that the Cypriot minister of labor's intended visit to Libya scheduled for 26 February was postponed. Informed sources told AL-MUSTAQBAL that the postponement of the visit was due to the Cypriot Government's fear that it would be subjected to new pressures from the jamahiriyah regarding the project for a Libyan radio broadcast from Cyprus during the course of the minister's visit. This project was proposed by Libyan secretary of information Muhammad

Hijazi during his visit to Cyprus early last August. Hijazi's visit on that occasion resulted in the signing of an information agreement between the two countries. The sources added that in his private councils during his visit to Cyprus, Hijazi stated that if the Cypriot Government failed to approve the radio broadcast, Libya would not concern itself with implementing the agreements concluded between the two countries. AL-MUSTAQBAL asked Dr al-Zubaydi about the accuracy of reports to this effect, and he replied as follows:

"First of all, the Cypriot minister of labor's visit to the jamahiriyah will take place in the near future and we are now seeking to have the delegation include a number of the leading labor people from Cyprus. As for the reports that Hijazi tied the implementation of the agreements to the Cypriot Government's approval of the Libyan radio broadcast project, these reports are not correct." He added: "As a general principle--or rather, at the heart of the jamahiriyah's policy is the principle of not tying the implementation of any agreement with any state to its approval--that is, the approval of that state--of any project proposed by the Libyan Government. With regard to the reports about the Libyan radio broadcast project and the Cypriot Government's approval or rejection of this project, this falls within the general policy followed by the Cypriot Government. We do not interfere in the internal affairs of any state."

The question which poses itself is this: Will the Government of Cyprus approve the project for Libyan radio broadcasting from the island?

It is a well-known fact that both the British radio station (BBC) and the Monte Carlo station own buildings in Cyprus from which they broadcast. Apparently, it is the existence of the British and French broadcasting stations which encouraged Libya to present its project to the Cypriot Government, especially since Libya and Cyprus have good relations and both states are members of the nonaligned organization.

AL-MUSTAQBAL has learned that the information agreement which Hijazi signed in Nicosia contained a provision concerning the radio project. However, the Government of Cyprus decided to delete this article feeling that it needed greater study, with the provision that future contacts would be made between the two states concerning the matter. Several months passed during which Cypriot President Spyros Kyprianou reshuffled his government and the new government has not investigated the Libyan radio broadcast project. Conducts made by AL-MUSTAQBAL revealed that the Government of Cyprus apparently has no intention of approving the Libyan radio broadcast project--although it has not announced this negative position as of yet--despite the fact that the jamahiriyah has offered to sell Cyprus Libyan oil at prices below world prices.

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COUNTRY'S INTERNAL STABILITY EXAMINED

Paris LE MONDE in French 11, 12-13, 14 Apr 81

[Article by special correspondent Jean Gueyras]

[11 Apr 81 p 5]

[Text] 1. Pyrrhic Victory over the Moslem Brotherhood

Damascus. "The Moslem Brotherhood no longer exists in Syria as an organized movement. Those among its leadership who are able to avoid being caught by the forces of law and order are in hiding or abroad where they are engaged in a fratricidal battle." Ahmad Iskandar, minister of information, believed to be close to President Assad, unlike most Syrian leaders we asked, was categorical: the critical period which the Ba'ath regime in Damascus has crossed in the first half of 1980 is a thing of the past and the "battle against terrorism" has been definitively won.

The very fact that Western journalists, whose presence was banned in Syria until February, have been readmitted into the country indicates that the authorities believe themselves to be sufficiently in control of the situation on the security level not to fear any longer the witnessing of impartial observers. The two weeks we spent in Damascus, where we were able to move quite freely, unlike the situation in some other Arab regimes, considered less controversial, allowed us to note that the optimism of our interlocutors was justified to a certain extent. It is unquestionable that the organization of the Moslem Brotherhood which only one year ago in some northern Syrian cities represented a kind of parallel power which challenged the authorities has been neutralized on the military level, particularly in Aleppo, the big northern city, and Hama, the traditional stronghold of Sunni Moslems.

It is equally true that the victory won by the Damascus authorities over their religious detractors, qualified here by some as a "Pyrrhic victory," has settled virtually nothing and has even aggravated the political, social and economic problems which have nurtured discontent among the population and armed opposition.

"We had no choice. We had to react if we wanted to maintain our credibility. Our very existence as the legitimate and revolutionary power of this country had been questioned," we were told by an official close to the regime. "In March 1980 all commercial activities in Aleppo had disappeared. Hama was paralyzed, and Damascus was threatened by a general strike, not to speak of the situation in the other cities in the north, which were virtually under the control of armed gangs of the Moslem

Brotherhood." What the supporters of the system seem to forget is that the moudjahiddin, officially qualified as "nothing but foreign agents," were operating at that time within the population of some urban centers like fish in water.

A Stressed Social Situation

The governor of Hama, who was appointed approximately one month before the outbreak of the March 1980 events, which almost shook up the Ba'ath regime, implicitly acknowledges that popular discontent facilitated the task of the terrorists. "The moment I was appointed," he told us, "I tried to calm the people down by unpriming a social situation which had become stressed by hardships of daily life. I quickly realized that the social claims were no more than a pretext for whipping up an agitation whose main target was the overthrow of the socialist system ruling the country."

Indeed, since the 16 June 1979 Aleppo slaughter, in the course of which some 60 Alid cadets attending the military academy were massacred in cold blood, opposition to the regime had entered a new phase marked by intensified repression and radicalization of terrorist action. By the end of the year this had developed into a state of urban guerrilla warfare, directed mainly against the members of the intelligence services (mukhabarat), officials and intellectuals, whether Ba'ath supporters or not, who were collaborating with the regime. The authorities estimate the number of "martyrs" killed by the terrorists in 1980 alone at "several hundred." The killers, furthermore, were attacking officials of lower ranks who were unprotected and were, therefore, vulnerable, creating the impression that no one could be considered safe, whereas they themselves, acting in the shadows and assisted by numerous accomplices within the population, seemed to enjoy relative impunity.

The major strikes in Aleppo and Hama, in March 1980, proved the power and effectiveness of the military organization of the Moslem Brotherhood, with its trained commandos, which could wage a struggle both clandestine and open. It was thus that the Aleppo strike, one of whose targets was to prevent the celebration of the 17th anniversary of the 8 March 1963 Ba'ath revolution, had been prepared with leaflets distributed under the very nose of powerless security forces, by young militants organized in columns of motorcyclists and Toyota drivers. It is these same activists who, subsequently, forced the merchants to join the strike, even though they had been forced by the authorities to keep their stores open, before they attacked public buildings and set on fire buses and the offices of the Syrian airlines and of Aeroflot.

The regime could not tolerate this challenge. In an effort to repair the situation, President Assad decided to resort to violence rather than to political measures which could calm down popular discontent. Possibly, at that time he had no other choice. The "recovery movement," which he had initiated at the end of 1979 for the reorganization and purge of the party and a governmental shuffle, with a view to removing the most compromised elements, had failed in the face of a general skepticism held toward reforms which were considered insufficient and hardly likely to modify the nature of the regime. It is claimed in this connection that the head of state hesitated for a long time before making his choice and that, at some point, he had thought of asking his brother Rifaat, the chief of the notorious "defense brigades," to make himself scarce for a while. Be that as it may, a decision was urgently needed, for the situation in Aleppo and Hama risked developing into a general insurrection at any moment.

At the beginning of April, the head of state took another step in the escalation of repression by ordering the Third Armored Division to encircle the two insurgent

cities. On 6 April, Easter Sunday, the "special units" commanded by Col Ali Haydar, noted for their "efficiency," entered Aleppo and occupied the famous Ayyoubid fortress which dominates the city. Aleppo was quickly divided into two sectors, the first of which was to be "cleaned house by house" in six days, while the second was to be cleaned up in three. According to official circles, such block operations, which were repeated on a lesser scale in May, June and, above all, July, following a new outbreak of violence which coincided with the month of Ramadan, had the sole aim of facilitating the search for terrorists and their arms caches. No brutalities were committed. However, it has been admitted in private that some excesses were committed by the security forces, exasperated by the "aggressiveness" and the "criminal methods" of "terrorist gangs." There is no doubt that some such "excesses," which left many innocent victims among the population, had been deliberately organized in order to make those who were aiding the Moslem Brotherhood realize that they had everything to lose by supporting and joining their activities.

On this subject the opposition speaks of "collective punishment," "taking hostages who were subsequently summarily executed," and of "corpses dragged down the streets to impress the population." It has been difficult to verify such information, some of which is likely to have been partially inflated by public rumor. However, the repressive action in Aleppo, which was duplicated in Hama in an identical scenario, proved to be particularly effective. "The population, the Aleppo bourgeoisie in particular, who had supported the Moslem Brotherhood so far, realized that the fight was by far too unequal and hopeless. The merchants, hard hit by the economic stagnation caused by the civil war climate which had prevailed ever since the Military Academy slaughter, wanted a return to a peaceful situation. A final massacre which took place in Aleppo on 11 August 1980, in the course of which the 80 inhabitants of an apartment building in the old town, from which a shot had been fired, were dragged out of their apartments and summarily executed. This raised the population's consternation and confusion to its peak. Suddenly the rebellion collapsed like a house of cards."

Since then, the balance of forces has changed in favor of the government, both in Aleppo and Hama. The Moslem Brotherhood was abandoned by a population which had become tired and traumatized by the harshness of the repression which had hit it hard. The terrorist organizations have lost the initiative and their operations are becoming more and more infrequent. The authorities, which were able to penetrate some terrorist cells, now have specific information on the intentions and plans of the moudjahiddin who "have stopped moving among the population like fish in the water."

Gradually, tranquillity has been restored throughout the territory. The bulk of forces of the Third Armored Division returned to the barracks in mid-January, joined one month later by Col Ali Haydar's special units. The Aleppo fortress has been reopened to tourists. The foreign visitor in Aleppo or Hama would be hard put to imagine that only several months ago these cities had been the theaters of dramatic and bloody events. Only a few armed civilians are mounting guard at public buildings in the two cities whose exits are still controlled with checkpoints.

Dismantled Network

The moudjahiddin's military defeat in the northern part of Syria was not exclusively the result of the harshness of the repression. It was caused equally by the defection

of Damascus, which in March of 1980 did not follow the northern rebellion. Actually, the Moslem Brotherhood was never able to mobilize the streets and the bazaar of the Syrian capital. The Damascus merchants, reassured personally by President Assad, maintained strict neutrality. Another element of dissuasion was the impressive protective apparatus set up by the authorities, maintained to this day despite improvements in the national security situation. Some districts in Damascus, particularly those housing ministries and embassies and the residences of high officials of the regime, look like actual besieged strongholds. Hastily erected stands on the sidewalks house many mukhabarat agents in civilian clothes. Armed with Kalashnikov submachine guns and walkie-talkies, they protect the safety of the residents along the river 24 hours a day. In the ministries and the headquarters of the party and the newspapers, the offices of the leadership remain locked from the inside. Innumerable military or camouflaged cars carrying policemen in blue uniforms or gendarmes in khaki and red berets, or Colonel Rifaat's soldiers in camouflage ceaselessly patrol the streets of the capital.

The fact that such a huge security system exists proves that the authorities have not been lulled by their own soothing statements, and that the condition of public order in the country remains precarious. The military threat which the uprising of the Moslem Brotherhood presented has been removed. However, a political and ideological vacuum remains. Repression has accentuated even further the isolation of a system worn out by 17 years of exclusive power. The presidential palace and the administrative complex under construction on one of the barren hills rising above Damascus can only symbolize this isolation unless quick action is taken on the political level to broaden the base of the Ba'ath system. Could it be, however, that after the shedding of so much blood, this is too late?

[12-13 Apr 81 p 2]

[Text] II. The Impossible Alternative

> In the second quarter of 1980 the Ba'ath authorities in Syria won the "battle against terrorist groups," of the Moslem Brotherhood. They succeeded by applying particularly strict repressive measures which did not settle any of the political, social or economic problems which had triggered the popular discontent which was the basis for the armed confrontation (LE MONDE, 11 April).

Damascus. "I do not approve of the terrorist actions of the Moslem Brotherhood, particularly when they promote religious and sectarian feelings in the country. I must admit, however, that the Moslem Brotherhood was the first to succeed in shaking up the foundations of Ba'ath, thus proving that the regime was vulnerable and that its overthrow was possible." Only 10 years ago, our interlocutor, a former university professor, was a party member. He had applauded "with both hands" when President Assad had overthrown the leftist group headed by the Jedid-Zouayen-Atassi team which was "unpopular and tyrannical," on 13 November 1970. He claims to have witnessed since that time "with consternation" the degradation of the new regime which has become "as unpopular and tyrannical if not more so" than its predecessor.

Like many other "moderate" opponents of the regime, our interlocutor is displaying a confusion which shows the extent of the dilemma facing the laic and leftist opposition. The latter tried to organize itself within a national rally, independent of the Moslem

Brotherhood, rallying, in addition to Riad Turk's dissident communists, members of several organizations supporting the left-wing Ba'ath and Nasser-style socialism. This rally was particularly active in Aleppo, where it took part in the popular movement of March 1980 in an effort to give it a "democratic and peaceful nature." "We were hit as hard as those who engaged in violent action," commented a representative of the rally, adding bitterly that "however, we insisted on proving our independence from the Moslem Brotherhood and asked for no more than democratic change."

As far as the authorities are concerned, the only opposition is that of the Moslem Brotherhood, inspired from the outside. "One cannot be both on the left and against the Damascus regime," we were told by Ahmed Iskandar, minister of information. "Those who oppose today's Syria, acknowledged by all progressive forces as a 'fortress of firmness,' are whether they want it or not on the side of the others." The others means the Moslem Brotherhood, Israel and the United States. The passionate reactions of some members of the opposition, who claim to be ready "to ally themselves even with the devil," for the sake of overthrowing the regime, seem to back up this Manichaean concept of the ratio of forces in Syria. Actually, far from being a bloc, the opposition encompasses a wide variety of heterogeneous trends, temporarily united in their common hostility toward the regime. The main complaint of Aleppo's Sunnite bourgeoisie is mainly that bureaucratic and socialist obstructions are disturbing its business. The integrationist Islamic circles in Hama and Homs consider that the power was usurped by the "Alid merchants, the heretics of Islam." The left, with the exception of Khaled Bagdash's communist party, which is supporting the regime because of its "anti-imperialist" orientation, and the moderate nationalists deplore the lack of basic freedoms and the arbitrariness "of a regime which suppresses anything which is not Ba'athist."

Since 1976, i.e., since the time when Syria was drawn into the "Lebanese hornets' nest," the Moslem Brotherhood has made much of the religious Alid nature of the regime in order to discredit the leadership. President Assad has been accused of going to the aid of the Lebanese Maronites, simply because he himself was a member of a minority sect in Syria, where the Alids account for about 10 percent of the population. What made such denigration even easier was that more than 80 percent of the country's population is Sunni.

Asked about the "Alid question," regime spokesmen claim that it is a "fabrication" of the opponents of Ba'ath. They point out that only 4 of the 21 members of the new party regional command, which was elected at the end of December 1980, are of Alid origin and that the ratio is even lower in Mr Kassem's government. The opposition's answer is that, actually, it is neither the party nor even the government that holds the power, but the head of state himself, surrounded by a small number of military, all of them Alids and all more or less related to the president. They emphasize in this connection the decisive role played by Col Rifaat Assad, commander of the notorious "defense brigades," an elite corps of some 20,000 men who are the praetorian guard of the regime, and whose special assignment is the defense of the Damascus perimeter, and to mention the "combat brigades" commanded by Col Adnan Rifaat, the president's nephew, the Alid defense militias, commanded by another brother of the chief of state, Maj Jamil, the "special units" commanded by Col Ali Haydar, who crushed the Hama and Aleppo strikes, and finally, the terrifying and ubiquitous civilian and military mukhabarat, tightly supervised by Alid officers.

The United Islamic Front

The presence of a large number of Alids in key positions in the regime is undeniable. However, it is historically explainable by the status of deprived minorities, which was the one shared by the Alids before the March 1963 Ba'ath revolution. Prevented from acceding to political and commercial functions, which were reserved for the Sunnite bourgeoisie, the Alids had no choice other than to join the army or work in education, careers which were not particularly appreciated at the time. This explains the high number of Alids among the military and the intellectuals who seized the power in 1963. In some respects the Ba'ath revolution was the revenge of the poor on the rich. Since then, however, it has become degraded and given birth to a new privileged class which has called upon Alid family and even tribal solidarity, rather than ideological considerations, in order to remain in power. By concentrating its terrorist attacks on high government officials of the Alid persuasion, as of 1977 the Moslem Brotherhood was able to crystallize the anti-Alid feeling which existed in a latent state among most Sunnites. However, it was only two years later, in mid-1979, i.e., after the Aleppo Military Academy massacre, that the Ba'ath leadership began to realize the gravity of the threat which the integration movement represented. Until then they had focused their attacks on the leftist opposition, Ba'athist or not, thus leaving a virtually virgin area to the integration movements.

The Moslem Brotherhood established itself in Syria at the start of the 1940s. However, it never developed into a strictly political party. In Syria, at least, it limited itself to promoting the strict observance of the Islamic principles in Syrian society. However, strengthened by the support of the poor and middle classes in the northern part of the country, it has never hesitated to ally itself with the rich whenever it felt that the political system was turning to the left. It was they who fought the nationalization measures of 1964 and 1965 by calling upon the faithful to wage a "holy war against the enemies of God." In 1966, once again it was they who mobilized the streets against the Ba'ath left wing which had seized the power in Damascus, and it was still they who, in 1973, following the proclamation of the constitution which did not mention Islam as the religion of the chief of state, triggered the public disorders in Hama, Homs and Aleppo.

The rebellion of the Islamic integration circles was enhanced, starting in 1975, by the degradation of the Damascus regime, contaminated by corruption, nepotism, careerism and the lack of democratic freedoms. Since then, several different trends, all of them claiming to be the heirs of the traditional Moslem Brotherhood, have crystallized within the Islamic movement. The most important among them, headed by Adnan Saadedin, the political head of the Moslem moudjahiddin (fighting vanguard), and Adnan Okla, the commander of its military branch, are the most active wing, engaged in both political and armed actions against the regime. The more conservative religious hierarchies are represented by the groups headed by Said Hawa in Hama, and Sheikh Baynanuni, in Aleppo. As a result of the failure of the armed struggle, these groups united toward the end of 1980 within a united Islamic front whose first political action was the publication last November of a "Declaration of the Islamic Revolution." This is both a kind of self-criticism and a timid attempt to define the objectives of the Islamic movement which seems, henceforth, to set itself as the political alternative to the Ba'athist regime.

The main concern of the drafters of the document seems to have been to dissipate the fears of the members of the laic and leftist opposition who, while supporting the

struggle of the Moslem Brotherhood against the regime, have never concealed their very serious reservations concerning the religious nature of the Moslem Brotherhood's propaganda and some of its methods of action, fearing, without expressing this overtly, the substitution of Islamic totalitarianism for Ba'athist arbitrariness. The November document is the beginning of an answer to such apprehensions. Ignoring the numerous references to the Koran, the document sounds like the tenets of a strictly constitutional democracy. The three signatories to the declaration--Adnan Saadedin, Said Hawa and Ali Baynanuni, who describe themselves as members of the Islamic revolution command, vigorously criticize the one-party regime and call for a "multiparty system" with a view to guaranteeing the protection of the citizens "all of whom are equal in the eyes of the law." Prisons, torture and special tribunals would be abolished; "all political parties would be authorized," and "freedom of thought and speech" would be recognized. Furthermore, the program calls for the creation of a supreme court which will review the constitutionality of the laws, guarantee the rights of religious minorities and favor the stricter separation of the powers.

On the economic level, the program reassures the rich bourgeoisie by supporting the protection of capital and private property and liberalization of trade. However, it calls for the preservation of the public sector, which would not be denationalized but would be "cleansed" and given to the workers who will become shareholders in the enterprises which employ them. Finally, the declaration extends the olive branch to the Alids, frequently threatened by "extermination" by the Moslem Brotherhood, by asking their "enlightened" representatives to disassociate themselves from the Ba'athist leadership.

It should be noted that the program was not approved by Dr Issam el Attar, believed to be the leader of the moderate branch of the Moslem Brotherhood, which is particularly influential among the Damascus bourgeoisie which maintained a wait-and-see attitude during the March 1980 events. Issam el Attar was kept out of the United Islamic Front by his peers who believed that in the course of his long exile in Europe he lost all contact with Syrian reality. The moderate leadership of the Moslem Brotherhood, in turn, severely blames the "adventurism" of his detractors, who are charged with having prematurely committed themselves to a test of strength against the Ba'ath with the now familiar outcome.

The leaders of the Islamic Front, most of whom are currently outside Syria, willingly acknowledge that errors were made. They admit specifically that the armed struggle had not been preceded by a campaign of political explanations which alone could have insured the brotherhood's success. They are using the current period of calm to review their actions and they believe that the United Islamic Front could represent an initial step leading to a broadened national front which would encompass the totality of the country's political forces.

The extent to which the political program they have recently made public could reassure their potential allies remains to be seen. Already now several ambiguous statements in the program, one of which is a short statement restricting the freedom of speech and thought, and granting the right to set up political parties "exclusively to forces which will not oppose the beliefs of the nation (i.e., Islam) and would have no foreign ties," appear restrictive and seem to proclaim a possible ostracism of some factions of the laic left.

Furthermore, the lack of any critical reference towards American policy, whereas communism and the Soviet Union are energetically condemned, seems to indicate that the preferences of the front which proclaims, otherwise, its concern with maintaining an equidistance between "East and West," are leaning more in the direction of the United States. Finally, the extremist position proclaimed by the front leadership on the Palestinian problem, demanding, "the rejection of any decision taken by the United Nations or other international agencies" and the rejection of any kind of compromise with the "Zionist entity" could only displease the many people in Syria who consider that the abcess of fixation created by the Israeli-Arab conflict should be lanced realistically through reciprocal concessions.

The Danger of a Resumption of Disturbances

The regime does not underestimate the danger which a resumption of disturbances would create. Not so long ago, it made discreet advances to some members of the opposition. Political detainees have been released, but not before signing statements favorable to the chief of state. Businessmen in the private sector were given the assurance that henceforth they will have the necessary foreign exchange with which to pursue their trade with foreign countries. New professional elections have been scheduled to resuscitate the unions of lawyers, physicians and engineers, which were dissolved last May because of their mild opposition to the regime. There is also talk of a new government headed by Mr Ayyoubi, a former prime minister who is trusted by the Sunnite and Saudi Arabian bourgeoisie.

All these openings, which are considered excessively timid, do not seem to have filled the gap created between the leadership and the opposition as a result of last year's bloody repression. "Terror and arbitrariness are still here," one of the leaders of the laic left claims. "It is true that there have been releases, but thousands of prisoners are still being detained without the slightest possibility of defending themselves. Worse, the number of people who 'disappear' without a trace is rising in a worrisome manner. Actually, the prison system created by the repressive authorities for the sake of insuring their own safety cannot become democratic. It is relying most of all on the weariness and despair of its opponents in its efforts to break up the opposition. The exodus of intellectuals and the young encouraged by the authorities who are happy to be rid of potential opponents, is assuming alarming proportions. Actually, what do the powers that be fear? For the time being they have the loyalty of the military, who remained faithful to President Assad during the troubles and enjoy the tacit support of the great powers and of most of the Arab countries, who seem to believe that after all there is no adequate alternative to the current regime."

[14 Apr 81 p 7]

[Text] III. No Peace Without Us....

Following the defeat caused by a bloody repression of Moslem Brotherhood "terrorism," the "Islamic" opponents are trying to rally the entire opposition within a national front directed against the regime. Some aspects of their methods and their program--which they made public last November--have not eliminated the reservations expressed by the laic and leftist opposition (LE MONDE, 11 and 12-13 April)

Damascus. Kuneitra, one hour by car from the Syrian capital, remains a ghost town. As the center of the Golan area, which was occupied in the Six-Day War, freed by the Syrians in 1973 and recaptured by the Israelis and, finally, restored to Syria in accordance with the "disengagement agreement" of May 1974, it was destroyed by the Israelis with dynamite and bulldozers. To this day the settlement looks like a city ravaged by a merciless earthquake. The only standing buildings are two mosques and one Greek Catholic church in disrepair. The city, inhabited by no more than a dozen people, who are obstinately clinging to the wreckage, has become an "anti-Israeli museum" which reminds the transient visitor that Syria remains in a state of war against its powerful neighbor. Why was nothing rebuilt? A representative of the center of the Golan area pointed out green hills surrounding Kuneitra, and one can see with binoculars the tractors of Israeli kibbutzim. "Why rebuild? The entire local population lived from farming. They have lost all their land...." At a somewhat greater distance, on the crests which dominate the Kuneitra basin, powerful Israeli radar is observing the entire Syrian territory 24 hours a day.

The loss of the Golan Heights has been bitterly resented by the Ba'athist regime, which was accused by its detractors not only of having been unable to defend it but of having done nothing to recover it. "We are in a state of war, and any action which weakens the 'domestic front' is an act of treason," counter the officials who unhesitatingly claim that the Moslem Brotherhood and its allies are guided from abroad by remote control as part of a "plot to isolate Syria and separate it from the defense of the Arab cause." Mahmoud Khair el Wadi, editor in chief of AL THAWRA, unofficial spokesman for the regime, said categorically that "there would have been no Moslem Brotherhood problem had Syria joined the capitulation process initiated by Sadat. Naturally, the Moslem Brotherhood makes use of the favorable circumstances created by some economic errors made by the regime. Its actions, however, were essentially such as to lead us along the path of surrender."

In other words, depicted as "a fortress of firmness" in the face of "Israeli plots concocted by the United States," it had become "the regime to be overthrown" the moment it refused to join the Camp David process. The leadership in Damascus sums up the scenario of the "anti-Syrian conspiracy" in a few sentences: "It is Kissinger's famous step-by-step diplomacy which is being currently applied. After the failure of the Egyptian stage we are now in the 'Jordanian stage' of a plot which calls for King Hussein to become part of the peace process. The United States is trying to save Camp David by making it more acceptable to the Arab countries. King Hussein, who maintains excellent relations with some Israeli leaders and who, everything that is being said notwithstanding, has not abandoned in the least his intention of speaking for the Palestinian people, is the ideal candidate for the successful completion of this task. The Hashemite king, therefore, has personally participated in attempts to destabilize the Syrian regime by giving the Moslem Brotherhood all the necessary material and political aid for the successful completion of its undertaking."

King Hussein Loses Interest

The AL THAWRA editor in chief said frighteningly: "Our common border with Israel is 200 km long, and were Jordan to follow Egypt's example we have close to 800 km to defend. This would be intolerable to us. We do not want another Sadat along our border and we shall do everything possible to prevent such a situation." He clearly implied that last November's boycott by Damascus of the summit meeting in Amman, followed by the dispatch of Syrian troops to the Jordanian border, was a clear warning to the Amman regime.

In private, the Syrian leaders bitterly complain of King Hussein's "loss of interest." After concluding a series of political and economic integration agreements with Damascus at the end of 1975, in 1979 Hussein made a 180-degree turn by joining what has since become the Ryad-Baghdad-Amman axis. Nevertheless, they claim not to fear excessively this attempt to isolate the Syrian regime, emphasizing that the latter has two major trumps which make it an indispensable partner to any definitive resolution of the Israeli-Arab crisis: the "unbreakable" alliance with the PLO and Damascus' "privileged" position in Lebanon. "There could be no peace in the Middle East without us," they repeat tirelessly. Asked about the pressure exerted on Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, the officials shrug their shoulders, adding that no one, whether the Lebanese, the moderate Arab countries or the West, truly wishes this to happen, for it would inevitably blow up the Lebanese powder keg. "All that they actually want," the officials state, "is our cooperation, so that like Jordan, Lebanon would become one of the elements of the new policy of capitulation to Israel." "It is a blackmail to which we shall never surrender," Ahmed Iskandar, minister of information, states, adding that even a possible suspension of the contributions made by petroleum-producing countries in the Gulf to the budget of the Arab deterrence force "would not change in the least the Syrian resolve." "Even if the mandate of the Arab deterrent force is not extended at the next June meeting of the Arab League," he said, "our forces will remain in Lebanon as long as the legitimate authorities in Beirut will not request our departure, regardless of any sacrifice which such a presence implies."

Relations between Damascus and the PLO have not always been good. The Palestinians are not about to forget quickly the Syrian intervention in Lebanon, which rescued in extremis the phalangists in trouble, in 1976. Nor have they always approved of the surprising balancing policy of the Syrians in Lebanon, which would support sometimes leftist and sometimes rightist forces. Quite recently, certain positions taken by the Palestinians, which Damascus considered excessively "conciliatory" and, above all, the conflict which broke out between Syria and Jordan, triggered a certain tension between the Syrian and the PLO leaderships. The PLO reluctantly boycotted the Amman Arab summit but has never approved of the charges leveled against Jordan. In its view, King Hussein has so far scrupulously observed the Arab resolutions acknowledging the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The leaders of the resistance movement, who would like to retain a reasonable margin of autonomy toward the Arab governments, to the extent that this is possible, are unwilling to mortgage their relations with Jordan, which provides them a vital link with the populations of the West Bank, or with Iraq, which following the 1978 reconciliation between Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat has given the PLO substantial financial aid.

The Sensible Partner

Setting aside all their differences, the two parties are closely united in what they consider an essential feature, i.e., their opposition to the Camp David policy and to its eventual substitute, the "Jordanian option." "We are all in the same boat, equally threatened by Israel's aggressive moves," claim our Palestinian interlocutors, who categorically deny "rumors" according to which Fatha elements are said to have helped the Syrian Moslem Brotherhood. "We fully support the Damascus regime and nurture no illusions about the type of government which could eventually succeed the current regime in Damascus," PLO officials add.

Curiously enough, the conviction that there is no acceptable alternative to the Syrian regime is shared by some moderate Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia. The latter fears that the fall of the Damascus government would result in a chaotic situation in Syria and in the neighboring countries. This view appears to be shared by many Western powers, the United States in particular. The friendship and cooperation treaty which Syria initialed with Moscow in October 1980 notwithstanding, Syria is far from being considered lost to the Western world.

The supporters of this thesis believe that if we ignore the rhetoric in the official propaganda conducted against Israel and its American ally, as "the main and basic enemy of the Syrian people," Syria could quite properly behave as a sensible partner in any eventual peace negotiations. "Let us not forget," we were told by a member of a university who could hardly be considered soft on the regime, "that without the Camp David agreements there never would have been a Syrian-Soviet treaty." Actually the idea of the treaty had originated in Moscow, immediately after the October 1973 war. Nevertheless, President Assad had preferred an "honorable and negotiated" outcome of the conference through the intermediary of the United States to the Soviet shield. His meeting with President Carter in Geneva, in 1977, had seemed to him particularly promising in this respect. This had only worsened his disappointment when the United States, initially surprised by President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, had subsequently become the godfather of the Camp David talks which deprived Syria not only of any military option but also of any hope of recovering the Golan Heights by peaceful means and within a reasonable period of time.

It should also be noted that Syria did not become the "Cuba of the Middle East" as a result of the treaty. The regime's structure remained virtually unchanged and the economic system remains based on an essentially Western-oriented flourishing private sector. Naturally, the conclusion of the treaty led to an increase in the number of Soviet military experts, which rose from 2,500 to 3,500. Nevertheless, these are only technicians who maintain the modern armaments supplied by the USSR and instruct the Syrian military in their handling.

The civilian experts, numbering about 1,000, assigned to public sector enterprises, keep a low profile if only for safety reasons, because of attempts on their lives made by the Moslem Brotherhood, who in a two-year period have killed about a dozen and wounded some 20 members of the Soviet personnel. Furthermore, frequent assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, the Russians have no military base in Syria but only docking and repair facilities in the military port of Tartus, where a Soviet repair ship is permanently anchored. A particularly revealing feature is that the treaty does not assign any function to Soviet military personnel on the level of the Syrian high command which, apparently, does not have to account for any of its decisions to its Soviet ally. On this subject, it is stated in Damascus that the Soviets were the last to find out, last November, that army units numbering some 25,000 men and 500 tanks had been moved to the Jordanian border.

Nevertheless, it is possible that, should an extensive diplomatic impasse develop in the Middle East, the heavy Soviet military presence in Syria--today used as a means of pressure against the West--may end up changing the nonalignment policy which the Syrian leaders are trying to preserve at all costs. Such a possibility is feared as much by President Assad as by the majority of the Ba'ath leadership, which has remained deeply pro-Western and hostile to communist ideology. It is with a certain amount of impatience, therefore, even after Reagan's election, that Damascus is

awaiting a "sensible" change in Washington's policy which would enable it once again to become part of a negotiation process, this time based on acceptable premises, i.e., premises which could lead to a settlement of the Golan Heights problem and meet the "just Palestinian claims."

This is what President Assad more or less told Van der Klaaw, the head of the Dutch diplomatic mission which visited Damascus last February for the purpose of sounding out Syrian intentions, implying that he was relying on a "European initiative truly independent of Washington" which would force the United States to modify its policy of unconditional support of Israel.

Syria urgently needs peace, for its economy is beginning to experience the backlash of the severe political crisis recently experienced by the country. The chances of a recovery are still burdened by the cost of the "pacification" operation in Lebanon. The fourth five-year plan (1976-1980), which was excessively ambitious, was fulfilled only partially. Consequently, the new 1981-1985 plan, whose outlines have not as yet been made public, will be limited to insuring returns from previous investments. This implies that virtually no new industrial projects will be started and that priority will be assigned to developing the country's infrastructures and services, with a view to eliminating the bottlenecks which led to the failure of the fourth plan.

The Aid of Arab Petroleum-Producing Countries

In an effort to defuse popular discontent, at the beginning of February 1980 the regime had decreed a raise of salaries in the public sector, averaging 65 percent. At the same time, it granted new facilities to private importers, which resulted in a net increase in imports. All of these measures, based on essentially political considerations, hit hard the most deprived population strata who were the main victims of an inflation which, according to some estimates, is said to exceed 20 percent. Furthermore, they contributed to an increase in the deficit of the Syrian treasury which was already hit by the costly policy of price support of prime necessity goods and by the defense and security budget, which accounts for about 50 percent of current expenditures.

The Syrian budget remains balanced only thanks to the aid of the Arab petroleum-producing countries, which pledged to give Syria, one of the "confrontation countries," an annual aid of $1.85 billion during the Baghdad Arab summit of November 1978. This does not include the $600 million which is the annual contribution of those same countries to the upkeep of the Arab deterrent force in Lebanon. In fact, in 1979 contributions to Syria did not exceed $1.4 billion.

The financial assistance pledged in Baghdad for mostly political reasons remains precarious. Thus, the Libyans, who are bad payers, have never honored their pledges, even after last September's ephemeral conclusion of a "unification agreement" which no one here takes seriously any longer. In 1980, Saudi Arabia and some Gulf Emirates, irked by the Syrian-Soviet rapprochement, dragged their feet at length before making their contribution, while Iraq had stopped its contribution in September.

Therefore, the Arab aid in 1980 is likely to have been lesser than in 1979. Were Ryad and its Gulf neighbors to decide to increase their pressure on Damascus, Syria's economic situation would rapidly become untenable. However, they too are not interested in destabilizing a regime whose collapse would not fail to trigger a shock whose waves would spare no country in the area.

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ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, INTERNAL SITUATION DISCUSSED

Paris LE CONTINENT in French 15-16 Apr 81

[Article by Kris Kutschera]

[15 Apr 81 p 8]

[Text] Syria's economy has undergone a "great leap forward" since the October 1973 war.

But now comes the moment of truth. The anticipated results are far from being achieved, and social tensions have been exacerbated by a policy that systematically favors the Alaouites. The fate of President Assad's regime depends in large part on the success or failure of his economic policy. We begin below the publication of a two-part series.

The second will deal with internal political problems.

Paradoxically, despite the approximately $2 billion in destruction that it caused, the October 1973 war was the beginning of the real industrial takeoff that Syria is experiencing today. In Homs, Hama, Alep, and on the coast at Tartous, Banyas and Lattaquie, new industrial complexes (cementworks, steelworks, petrochemicals, metal processing) have just been completed or are in the process of completion.

This national takeoff is not confined to industry alone: New roads have been built, like the 350 km highway connecting Damascus with Alep.

New electric generating plants have been built, like those at Banyas, and the gigantic dam project on the Euphrates, completed in 1978, is beginning to pay dividends in the fields of energy, irrigation, and agriculture. A few figures summarize the phenomenon: Before the October 1973 war, foreign assistance to Syria was around $50 million per year. After the war, this assistance was on the order of $600 million between 1974 and 1978--and exceeded $1 billion following the Baghdad summit (November 1978), whose participants pledged to provide Syria $1.8 billion per year for 10 years.

Taboo Subject

Another still more striking figure, illustrates the current situation in Syria: At the end of the 1960's, when the regime preceding that of General Hafiz al-Assad went ahead with "massive" nationalizations, the total value of the nationalized industrial sector was estimated at 185 million Syrian livres (1 Syrian livre = 1 franc). During the last 3 years of the fourth plan (1976-80) the yearly total of Syrian investments was about 8 billion LS [Syrian livres]--about half of which went to industry and mines. The leap, therefore, has been gigantic. But now the time has come to look at the record, according to Husayn al-Qadi, the minister for industry. "We want to obtain the dividends from our investments, we want to get to the production stage--now." This imperative, to make the investments already in place pay off, is of such high priority that the authors of the next five-year plan (1981-85) will probably wait until the end of the year for the conclusions of the Syrian leadership, before they prepare it.... The problem of productivity is a taboo subject in Syria--it is the subject of impassioned discussions within the Bath Party, but Syrian leaders are reluctant to mention it publicly, because it questions the structure and the performance of the regime.

Like most industrializing countries in the Middle East, Syria is facing a serious problem in the lack of skilled labor: managers, engineers, foremen, and technicians. What is even more absurd is that Syria has these people, but it exports them to the oil countries of the region and to the Western countries. One of the basic problems is salary: in the public sector (more than 70 percent of Syrian industry, and all heavy industry), salaries are ridiculously low: LS 650 for a worker, between 1,000 and 2,000 LS for an engineer--4 or 5 times less than in the Gulf.

The problem of salaries and vocational training of personnel is not the only one affecting productivity: the "overhiring" of workers in factories, interference from the labor unions and the security forces, the naming of "political" managers who are often poor administrators, seriously affects productivity. But what a growing number of Syrians are questioning is the nature and selection of the industrial projects. Some accuse their ministers of having signed contracts more on the basis of their "commissions" than of the economic usefulness of the projects, and of having pawned Syria's industrial future for gigantic prestige projects.

Growing Social Tensions

The gigantic effort to build infrastructure which President Assad's regime has pursued for the last 8 years has not brought about a proportional improvement in the Syrian standard of living. Doubtless, because agriculture, which still employs one of every two Syrians, does not appear to be getting its proportional share of the investments in the last five-year plan: a little more than 20 percent, of which the biggest part went into the Euphrates dam. Impoverished, peasants emigrate in large numbers to the cities, in search of imagined jobs.

Extremely complex, the wage scale for the nationalized sector of the Syrian economy (civil service, state-owned industry, big agricultural projects, the army...) varies between 650 and 2,000 LS per month. When he has to pay half his salary for rent, a married official who has studied at the university and makes LS 1,200 per month is obviously not going to be able to make ends meet: A real cry of despair escapes from him: "What do I think about all day? How am I going to pay for my

food, my clothes.... You see, it is the officials and workers of the country who are paying for the country's development. We are told: 65 percent of the budget is devoted to defense.... But why do the businessmen, the middle class, not pay a little?"

Indeed, what is exacerbating social tensions is the strange coexistence in Syria of a socialist-type economy--with a very large sector controlled by the state--and a liberal-type economy, where the law of profits reigns supreme.

Alongside the more than 300,000 employees who eke out a living on wages of a few hundred livres, merchants and businessmen in the private sector live in the comparative affluence of European life-styles, and several major middle-men and commission agents are living as well as the billionaires of the Gulf. In a regime which calls itself socialist and imposes some of the constraints of socialism, these disparities are intolerable. Naturally, as is emphasized by Elie Nejme, head of the Political Science Institute and the cadre school of the Baath Party, "The Government has never thought that we could open up several fronts at the same time: If we are threatened on the external front (Israel), we cannot open up an internal front." This is good war strategy. But not only does the regime tolerate a traditional capitalist sector--even within the "socialist" sector of the economy--it also gives its partisans special treatment which contributes to the exacerbation of social and, what is more serious, religious tensions.

While an engineer with major responsibilities in an industrial complex must be content with a salary of LS 1,800 per month--if he has seniority--an Alaouite general will get a salary that is virtually equivalent to LS 2,000--plus benefits such as cars, drivers, personnel, etc. which one person has estimated are worth... LS 12,000 per month: An ordinary employee in a ministry who makes LS 1,200 per month can obtain an interest-free loan to buy an apartment, if he is a member of the Baath Party. Applied in the first instance to party members, and above all to the Alaouites, this systematic "special treatment" risks undercutting the popular base of a regime whose basic merit, in economic terms, was its continuity.

[16 Apr 81 p 8]

> [Text] The Baath regime of Syria under Hafiz al-Assad, though in theory pledged to the unification of the Arab nation, today finds itself rather isolated. An isolation which the recent events in Lebanon threaten to accentuate. Relations with Jordan (embittered by the Muslim Brotherhood issue) and with Iraq (Damascus is tilting toward Tehran in Iranian-Iraqi conflict) seem to have reached a point of no return. Though it is necessary to make allowances: various Jordanian-Syrian economic cooperation projects continue on track without too much difficulty, and President Assad on 13 April received the Jordanian delegation attending the 15th Palestinian National Council in Damascus.

"Saddam you bum, Saddam you bum...Those who surround you are nothing but (deleted).... Hussein you bum, Hussein you bum, you have been bought and sold for money!" In the great amphitheater at the University of Damascus the raging crowd hurls its invectives into the bright night air. On the podium, President Hafiz al-Assad, a sigh

on his lips, obviously carried away, interrupts his speech for a few moments to listen to what is for him apparently the sweetest of songs, even more sweet than the torrent of eulogies just showered on him by the official poet of the regime.

Broadcast live on Syrian television, rebroadcast several times in the following days, the spectacle is surprising to a foreign observer, accustomed to heads of state being accorded a certain respect.... But in Syria, when conspiracies are rife, no one pays attention to that. And, contending that "the first Muslim Brotherhood assassinations took place just after the Sinai accord," President Assad will devote the greater part of his marathon speech of 8 March to demonstrating that Syria is the victim of the "Camp David conspiracy," the sole aim of which is to "make Syria participate in the assassination of Palestine."

The Point of No Return

Despite the frequent spectacular turnabouts in this part of the world, it seems that relations between Syria and its Iraqi and Jordanian neighbors--not to mention the more distant Sadat--have reached a point of no return. "Syria cannot tolerate a new Sadat on its borders; if Jordan persists in playing that role, Syria will have to fight it to the end," says Mohammed Haidar, a member of the national Baath command structure, but a complex man, considered pro-Saudi, and a candidate to succeed the current prime minister.

With regard to Iraq, the language of the Syrian rulers is just as violent: "The Iraqis have done everything they could to have the worst possible relations with Syria; they have encouraged killings within Syria by supplying the money, by supervising the killers," adds Ahmed Iskandar, the Syrian information minister. But the deterioration in relations between Syria and its two neighbors goes beyond mere imprecations. In early February, the Jordanians arrested a commando team composed of six Syrian soldiers led by a colonel, who were making preparations for an attempt to assassinate Moudar Badrane, the Jordanian prime minister. The six men confessed to having received their orders from one of the sons-in-law of Rifaat al-Assad, the Syrian president's brother. And not only did Jordanian television broadcast the confessions of these men, but it also broadcast their disclosures about the Palmyre massacres. Few recent television broadcasts have made such an impact in Syria: Giving many details about the names and the units of the men who participated in that affair, the members of the Syrian commando team swore before the Jordanian television cameras that last summer (26 June 1980) Rifaat al-Assad, wild with rage after the attempted assassination of his brother, had ordered the massacre of several hundred political prisoners--the majority of them members of the Muslim Brotherhood--detained at the Palmyre prison.

The Vagaries of Financial Aid

The most fantastic rumors about this subject had been circulating in Syria for some time, but for many Syrian television viewers, it was not an established fact. By thus directly attacking his brother, King Hussein had struck a blow that President Assad would doubtless never forgive.... Also, Damascus is a haven for the "National Patriotic and Democratic Front" that unites the anti-Iraq opposition. Composed, basically of the Iraqi Communist Party, the Kurdistan Patriotic Union, and the dissident Iraqi Baath Party, this front gets all the more support from Syrian authorities because the leaders of the dissident Iraqi Baath Party are part of the

national Baath command whose secretary general is President Hafiz al-Assad. The avowed aim of the front: To overthrow the regime in power in Iraq, in order to establish a "democratic" regime.

Syria's relations with the rest of the Arab world, while not hostile, are far from being as warm as Syrian leaders claim, as is shown by the unevenness with which the Arab countries disburse the financial aid they pledged to supply to Syria at the Baghdad Summit (1978)--amounting to $1.8 billion per year for 10 years.

Algeria and Libya have never put in their share, either in 1979 or in 1980, though, according to some sources, Algeria made a contribution to the settling of part of the military debt Syria owed to the USSR. And Iraq, which, despite the deterioration in its relations with Syria, had paid its share in 1979, did not disburse its third installment in 1980.

It is very difficult to estimate exactly the amount of financial aid received by Syria in 1980, as the figures vary between $900 million according to the most pessimistic calculations and $1.4 billion according to the most optimistic. But it is obvious that Syria's bankers are the Gulf Emirates and Saudi Arabia--which explains the care Syrian leaders take to avoid implicating Saudi Arabia in the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria: Ahmed Iskandar, the minister of information, says that "in the course of our investigations we have not found any links between Saudi Arabia and what is happening in Syria...." At the very most, a personality like Elie Nejme, head of the political science institute, will mention the role of "individuals living in Saudi Arabia...." But obviously, relations with the great kingdom are a taboo subject....

Unification With Libya

Discussions with Libya about unification seem to be marking time, despite the recent meeting in mid-March in Damascus of the interministerial committee responsible for developing the "formula for union." "We will have only one president, only one capital, only one cabinet," asserts Ahmed Iskandar triumphantly, adding however: "No deadline has been set.... We are not in a hurry." Indeed, it seems that the Syrians are in so little hurry that they imprisoned a number of their officers participating in a pro-Libyan "unity organization" which was preparing a coup last year--doubtless in order to accelerate a unification process that was moving much too slowly for Col Qadhdhafi.

As for Lebanon, while nothing has filtered down about the Assad-Sarkis summit of 10-11 March in Damascus, it was obvious that the two presidents were not able to harmonize their respective conceptions of the Syrian "presence" in Lebanon. And on the first day of the "summit," one of the Lebanese journalists covering the Assad-Sarkis talks predicted there would soon be an explosion in Lebanon.

After 18 years in power, the record--in terms of inter-Arab relations--is thus fairly negative for a party like the Baath that sees itself in the first instance as the architect of the unification of the Arab nation.

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HOUSING PROJECTS UNDER 4th FIVE-YEAR PLAN DISCUSSED

Abu Dhabi AL-WAHDAH in Arabic 4 Feb 81 p 2

[Article: "The Housing Plan Is Before the Council of Ministers"]

[Text] A Housing Unit for Each Family, and Settlement of the Bedouins.

Construction of New Villages and Expansion of Existing Villages.

Dubai, UAE News Agency--The Ministry of Public Works and Housing, in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning, has finished preparing the first five-year plan for housing for the years 1981-1985. A memorandum concerning this matter has been forwarded to the Council of Ministers so that the Council can discuss it during its next meeting.

His Excellency Ahmad Jasim al-'Abdali, deputy minister of public works and housing, told the UAE News Agency that the basic objective of the plan is to provide a housing unit for every family. He said that the plan has specified a number of secondary objectives. They include dealing with the congestion and crowded living conditions which exist in some levels of housing by constructing housing units whose rental payments correspond to the incomes of the families presently living in these congested conditions. Another objective is to improve the level of housing so that the housing will be of a better type. Also, the plan calls for efforts to restructure the existing housing situation by increasing the supply of housing units for people of average and low income, and building fewer luxury housing units.

Mr al-'Abdali pointed out that one of the secondary objectives of the five-year housing plan is the construction of new villages and expansion of existing villages. The purpose of this is to settle the Bedouins, encourage them to cultivate and utilize agricultural lands, to build housing for workers near their work areas, and to furnish these housing areas with all of the necessary basic utilities.

Another objective of the plan is to replan various areas inside existing cities for the purpose of improving the situation there with regard to concentration of urban construction. Another purpose is to deal with the mortgage problems which have arisen as a result of the spontaneous nature of the development which took place during the years before the existence of the plan. The deputy minister of public

works made it clear that the five-year plan aims at achieving modernization of the equipment and facilities used for building and construction and the utilization of modern technology in this field. In addition to this, the plan aims at providing the necessary technical and professional labor force in this sector by means of setting up vocational training establishments and centers and selection of the best personnel from the foreign labor force who can be employed on the technological level utilized in building and construction.

The plan also has the objective of increasing the capacity and effectiveness of small contracting organizations by means of encouraging national companies to merge, establishing companies with large potential, and calling upon Gulf companies, Arab companies, and international companies to participate in implementing the projects of the plan.

The plan also deals with the creation of technical bodies in the ministries and local government offices and providing them with the best scientific and technical personnel. The plan also has in mind to conduct a survey of the contracting organizations which are active in the country in order to become familiar with factors concerning their shortcomings. Furthermore, the plan aims at increasing the number of industrial enterprises which produce basic building materials and for which the elements of industry are locally available--such as the industry which produces iron for reinforced concrete, the cement industry, and the brick industry.

The deputy minister for public works and housing mentioned that the five-year plan has proposed a number of recommendations concerning housing in the country. They include discussing the ministry's housing plan in the framework of a plan for urban planning in the country, entrusting the implementation of housing projects to a single organization, and giving this organization the necessary authority so that conflicts and duplication of efforts can be avoided. Concerning low-cost housing, the plan has proposed making available suitable locations for low-cost housing within the framework of the plan for urban planning. The plan recommended setting up large housing complexes because this would make it easy to provide necessary services such as electricity, water, schools, clinics, and roads, but bearing in mind that the services are to be completed within the same time-frame as the construction of the low-cost housing.

The plan also calls for the preparation of a low-cost housing plan with integrated elements in the country, distribution of the task of implementation in coordination with all of the local and national organizations in order to avoid duplication of efforts, and the provision of the amounts of money necessary for the construction of this low-cost housing in accordance with the housing models which have been designed.

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FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL DISCUSSES ELECTRICITY, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROBLEMS

Abu Dhabi AL-WAHDAH in Arabic 4 Feb 81 p 3

[Article by Mahjub Musa: Reprint of proceedings of Federal National Council meeting on 3 Feb 81]

[Text] In Its Session Yesterday, the Federal National Council Found No Justification for Not having a Unified National Electricity System, So It Assigned the Matter to the Minister. It Was Afraid That the Social Welfare Law Would Run Into Difficulties, So It Approved It.

Its Chairman Demanded That It Be Transformed Into a Legislative Body in Order That It Go Beyond the Stage of Merely Making Recommendations.

Taryam 'Umran: "We Refuse to Be People Who Make Recommendations. We should Be a Legislative Body Which Passes Laws for the Government to Execute."

Salih al-Shal: "Our Country's Population Is 1,500,000, We Produce 2,000,000 Barrels of Oil Per Day, and Our Citizens Are Deprived."

Hamad Bu Shihab: "Work Comes Before Social Assistance."

Al-Jarwan: "I Am Not Against the Increase, But It Will Delay the Law for Another Year."

Sultan Khalifah: "The Ministry of Electricity Does Not Know What To Do. It Cannot Convince the Government, and Temporary Improvised Solutions Are of No Use."

Improvised Solutions Are of No Use."

Rashid 'Uwaydah: "Let Them Have Some Fruit to Eat."

"In spite of the fact that 9 years have gone by since the founding of the UAE, our electricity services have not been standardized

and our electricity system has not been developed in an organized consistent manner throughout the country."

This was what was said by seven members of the Federal National Council, in yesterday's session of the Council, as an introductory statement to the debate dealing with the government's policy concerning electricity. The session was chaired by His Excellency Taryam 'Umran, chairman of the Council, and was attended by his excellency the minister of electricity and water as well as his excellency the minister of labor and social affairs who was invited to attend the debate concerning another clause that had to do with the federal social assistance law. The session began at 1020 am, and 15 members of the Council were absent.

Taryam: We have a legal quorum. But this problem of absenteeism has gone on quite a lot, and we have called attention to it more than once. Now as for the agenda. We will not discuss the real estate bank law because his excellency the minister of finance is not in the country. What we will do is to begin a discussion concerning the policy of the government with regard to electricity rather than beginning with a discussion of the social assistance law.

Salih al-Shal: This subject has been brought up long ago. The Electricity Department in Ra's al-Khaymah is unable to hook up electrical service to 3,000 low-cost housing units. I have read a statement by an official who said that Ra's al-Khaymah will not be having electricity next summer. Why is this?

Sayf Sultan: Electricity is the artery of our life. But in spite of the ministry's efforts, there still exist problems. Last year the electricity kept getting "cut off" every day in the eastern region. The excuse was always that there was too much demand for electrical power! The low-cost housing units are distributed to our citizens and it is demanded of them that they pay the cost of hooking up electrictity to their units. Why is that? What efforts are being made to unify the electricity system, but it does not take place. What is the reason for this, and what should be our solution?

Muhammad al-'Amiri: There are two sides to the problem--[lack of] a unified national electricity system, and irregularity of electricity services. The minister has already mentioned the lack of a national unified electricity system, and there are constant power failures. I do not blame the ministry entirely for this. The consumers also have their share of the blame. Many installations are built without the ministry knowing about them.

Jabr Sayf: The government demands that its citizens buy electrical equipment and connections. My question is: "How much of an effort has been made to unify our electricity system? What are the obstacles to achieving this?"

Sultan Khalifah: The solution to the electricity problem requires money and requires that a decision be made! So far we have not seen either. We believe in rapid development, but we do not believe in having power failures. We lack a plan for the future. The ministry does not know what to do because it cannot convince the government, and temporary improvised solutions are of no use. The minister has plans, but the fault is that of the government. I suggest that a committee be

formed in order to study the situation so that we can get out of this mess. We have no plan. Everything is improvised. We have "cities which are exploding spontaneously." The government should change its point of view with regard to electricity. Why does the government give a principality electricity [only] because it has a factory? The government is being negligent!!

Faraj ibn Hammudah: Our life depends on electricity, and this matter requires an extensive plan. [We need to] install large steam-powered machines which cost less, and link the whole country by means of a unified electricity system. We are a small country, and we should be able to link our whole country in this manner.

The minister of electricity: The ministry has been making continual efforts to achieve the unification of our national electricity system. But we frankly admit to you that there are obstacles which stand in the way of this. Above all, the matter is a political one. Some emirates have demanded that their electricity system be unified, and we have forwarded a memorandum to this effect. But our discussion of the matter always gets postponed. We want the government to make a political decision concerning this. Yes, there is a lack of electricity in Ra's al-Khaymah because it was not delivered to us. There will continue to be a lack of electricity there because the government of Ra's al-Khaymah does not have the necessary capacity to solve the problem. Its electric power lines are weak, they carry only a small amount of current, and they need to be replaced.

And now concerning the matter of electricity getting cut off in al-Fujayrah. We have undertaken to eleminate this shortcoming by repairing the Diba-al-Fujayrah power line. There is also a plan to install a power plant in Qidfa'. But, as is true throughout the world, we have to collect fees to pay for this, and nobody can be exempted from these fees. I suggest that the Ministry of Public Works install the electricity connections inside the low-cost housing units and then hand them over to our citizens complete and ready for occupancy.

In some emirates there is a surplus of electrical power, and other emirates suffer from a lack of it. If the electricity system were unified throughout the country, then we would achieve a balance and would achieve justice that would apply equally to all of our citizens.

[illegible] Ghadah: What is the story concerning electricity in Ra's al-Khaymah? What are the obstacles preventing the government from receiving its electricity despite Ra's al-Khaymah's request which was never answered. Ra's al-Khaymah is shackled by debts and wants reimbursement for what it has spent [on electricity]. Why should its electricity be handed over free of charge to the national government, which is a rich one? We should support the government of Ra's al-Khaymah. If you want us to live in harmony with each other, then something must be done.

[illegible] 'Abd al-Jabbar: Some people received housing without electricity and without water. And there are some areas where the electricity, which is enough to power all the low-cost housing units, goes to palaces and factories. This appears to be the reason why the electricity has not been included into the national electricity network. The person who loses out is the average citizen. The palaces and factories have all the electricity they want, but he is deprived of it. We must find a solution to these disparities which deprive our citizens.

Salih al-Shal: Several facts have emerged here. Local governments have requested that "their electricity" delivered to them, however, funds and a decision on this matter are necessary. Our citizens have a problem with their housing and with electricity. The citizens are the ones being deprived. The population of our country is 1,500,000, and our country produces 2,000,000 barrels of oil per day. But in spite of this our citizens are deprived. Next summer some emirates will not be having electricity. The Council supports the ministry. It is a matter of life and death for our nation. For 9 years we have been demanding a permanent constitution. The temporary constitution calls for a national unified electricity system. We have been demanding and demanding such a national unified electricity system, but we still do not have it.

Maryam: Which comes first, unification as a result of a merger, or electricity? We demand basic things first. Some principalities have refused to hand their electricity system over to the government.

Al-Shal: We demand a frank answer to this question. Why has our electricity system not been unified?

Sa'id al-Nabudah: Please do not get emotional and upset. Our low-cost housing units should be complete in all aspects. It is not a farsighted plan to have various and different electricity systems. We need to create long-range plans. But the idea of reimbursing Ra's al-Khaymah is not raised.

Rashid 'Uwaydah: We must hasten to make a study concerning the centralization of electricity for the industries which need to be established here. We do not have enough electricity for that now. And we need to set up central power stations which are linked to each other because some of them are short of electricity.

Muhammad al-'Amiri: Some emirates such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah we do not have to worry about. The problem is, for example, that of Ra's al-Khaymah and the debts which its power station has been accumulating. It is the small emirates that are demanding unifacation of the national electricity system. But this demand should originate from the larger and richer principalities so that they can set an example for the others. I demand to know the reason why the electricity system of Ra's al-Khaymah has not been incorporated into the national system.

The minister of electricity: I have demanded that the Ra's al-Khaymah utility be incorporated. But this is a political decision, and it is in the hands of higher authorities. Is it obligatory or optional to follow the constitution in this matter?

The legal advisor: The constitution was ratified by the rulers. This means that they accepted the idea of having the utilities be unified in a national system. It is taken for granted that this is what people are working for, and that every ruler will be carrying out what he promised to do.

The minister: We are ready for immediate assumption.

Salih al-Shal: We would like a clarification concerning Mr al-'Amiri's question and the question of the minister himself. We would like an answer which tells the reason so that we can proceed on this basis.

The minister: We received a letter from the Ra's al-Khaymah government and then forwarded a memorandum to the Council of Ministers. Taking over the stations and unifying them into a national electricity system will require money and will require that a decision be made. We were not able to obtain the decision. Shaykh 'Abd al-Jabbar: The Ra's al-Khaymah station should be taken over by the national government so that debts do not accumulate.

Taryam: Some emirates refused to hand over their utilities to the national government. At that time the reason for this refusal was due to political differences. Later the emirates were requesting to receive their electricity. There are power stations which the national government has not taken over, but continues to fund. Both for political reasons and for the sake of unity this utility should be unified into a national system. We have demanded this before, but nothing has happened. This is not the fault of our citizens. For unification of the electricity system to come about, a political decision is necessary. How long must we wait for such a unification plan? We are imploring the government with regard to this matter, because it is a matter which concerns both our country and our citizens.

Muhammad al-Basti: If I were in the minister's shoes, I would submit my resignation so that I would not be accused of negligence.

Al-Shal: We thank the minister. But as we just heard, this matter is one which concerns both our country and our citizens, I demand the formation of a committee which will go pay a visit to the person who will make the decision concerning this matter. Let us not send up any more recommendations because such recommendations are useless and carry no weight.

Taryam: I welcome this ebullient national feeling that our members have. But recommendations are something that are not responded to. We anticipated this and we are not to blame because we have been trying to change things and we have been demanding that things be done to which our nation and our citizens aspire. We refuse to be people who make recommendations. We should be a legislative body which passes laws for the government to execute. Committees have been formed to deal with important issues, but nobody is responding to them. There exists a committee which is supposed to meet with the rulers and discuss a permanent constitution. We are simply ready to do our duty. We demand that our voice be heard, otherwise we should simply sit in our homes. Why is there a unified national public health system and a unified national educational system, but no such unified national electricity system? We are citizens who have the right to make demands and impose our opinions. We do not need people to tell us--and we reject the exaggerations of those who would have us believe--that we should change our Council.

The upshot of the matter is that we want the minister to continue his efforts and to inform the Council of what happens.

The Social Welfare Law

The second issue which was taken up by the Councils's session was the national draft law concerning social assistance.

The minister of labor: The government's social welfare policy should aim at the advancement of our citizens and of our society, and at providing a better foundation for growth in our country. This policy should be oriented toward spreading a feeling of peace of mind and security among our citizens, providing them with a suitable income, and expanding the coverage of social welfare assistance. A means must be provided for our citizens to be able to show initiative, be creative, participate, and contribute toward the value of our society so that they can live a decent life, be productive, and not be dependent on anyone. The changes involve three categories of people--students, families of prisoners, and abandoned women. We have been endeavoring to emphasize their right to receive vocational training and job preparation.

Hamad Bu Shihab: The constitution guarantees our citizens the right to wrrk. The government should provide them with this right so that the categories of people dealt with by this draft law can make their contributions toward our national income. Work comes before social assistance.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Jabbar: What are our uneducated citizens supposed to do? The ministries are already full of our people who are working there as servants, office boys, and messangers. We should encourage our citizens to do something and not to just sit around at home.

Al-Jarwan: I am in favor of the increase, but approving the increase will delay the law for another year. I do not object to 800 [dirhams] for the head of a family. I am not against the increase. But experience impels me to say that whoever knows the difficulties that I have faced in the government, including any change in the direction of an increase, [will understand that such difficulties] have made me not confident that the increase will be agreed to.

Taryam: In that case, I have my reservations.

Al-Shal: So do I.

The minister: The draft law was submitted to the government in early 1980, was brought up for discussion time and time again, and was approved only at the beginning of 1981. The reason for this is that we increased the number of individuals of a family to 16 individuals. If only some increase had been demanded due to high prices and the high cost of living.

Salih al-Shal: 600 dirhams are not anywhere near enough.

Taryam: I agree. This is not enough for anybody.

Rashid 'Uwaydah: This amount is very small, and we must add to this the fact that the cost of living has become very high and nobody can cope with it.

The minister: My experience with the government has taught me that I will find it difficult to obtain this increase.

Al-'Amiri" Even fishing has been abandoned by our citizens, and the fishing is being done by Indians and Pakistanis. Our citizens "are sitting around and spending

their social welfare assistance." A paragraph should be included which prevents this type of dependence.

Taryam: It should be agreed upon that whoever does not work should not receive social assistance.

Sa'id al-Nabudah: The draft law has run into difficulties. I ask that we go along with the minister of labor and not demand an increase. "The people of Mecca are the ones who best know the ravines in Mecca [meaning "the minister knows more about this than we do"]."

Al-Jarwan: In Kuwait a single person receives 800 dirhams. I as one of the government authorities am in favor of 800 dirhams. The government, of course, has the last say in this matter.

Taryam: It is not that we want to live in the lap of luxury, but because conditions have changed. Household servants get more [than this]. Our govennment never intervenes to control prices.

Al-Jarwan: I want this law to be passed quickly. Changing the rates [of payment] will delay passage of the law and this will be harmful to our citizens.

Al-'Amiri: The minister is right. This change will delay passage of the law.

Al-Shal: But we should voice our opinion. Who among us here lives on 600 dirhams? Our telephone bill alone is 600 dirhams a month!! I demand that the figure be at least 1,500 dirhams a month.

Taryam: Let us satisfy our conscience. This is a citizen's right, and he should not have to beg anyone.

Rashid: I think that the head of a family should receive 1,000 dirhams, a wife should receive 800 dirhams, and a son should receive 300 dirhams. We should let these poor people have some fruit to eat. [End of quote]

The Council then resolved to send a recommendation to the government exempting those who receive social welfare assistance from having to pay for electricity and water. Also, the Council decided that the head of a fimily should receive 800 dirhams.

[Insert] Inquiry About the Permant Constitution

Council member Ahmad Khalaf al-Mazru'i, at the end of the session, inquired about the committee which had been entrusted with the task of meeting our rulers and discussing the pemmanent constitution. His Grace Taryam 'Umran Taruam stated that the committee had met and discussed all the steps it would take, and that it had decided to prepare a written document which would be delivered to his highness the head of state and the members of the Supreme Council. The committee was not able to set a date for a meeting with his highness the head of state because he is presently involved in a number of official duties both inside and outside the country.

We will meet with his highness when he returns to the UAE.

[Insert] Not in the Minutes of the Session

Fifteen members were absent from yesterday's session. More than one member has called attention to the seriousness of this phenomenon.

Both the deputy minister of electricity and the deputy minister of labor attended the meeting. They talked, but only to each other! Muhammad al-'Amiri praised the Ministry of Electricity. Taryam commented: "I thank you on behalf of the minister."

When Jabr Sayf wanted the floor, one of the Council members left. He thought that this was the minister of electricity, so he refused to speak until the minister came back! But the members shouted, saying: "He is here, so go ahead and speak."

Faraj ibn Hammudah is the Council member who quotes figures more than anybody else. He concluded his remarks by saying: "Why can't we link our country with an electricity network? We are not America! We are a small country."

The minister of electricity asked: "Is the constitution's provision concerning electricity obligatory or optional?" The legal advisor gave his answer. Then Taryam commented: "The question was a diplomatic one, and the answer was also diplomatic, but somewhere in between we forgot about electricity!!"

Muhammad al-Basti said: "If I were in the minister's shoes, I would submit my resignation so that I would not be blamed." The minister of electricity commented: "I agree."

Sayf Sultan, when discussing the number of individuals in a family, said: "We should encourage our families to have more children. We are not Bangladesh."

After the Algerian delegation left, the discussion heated up. Shaykh 'Abd al-Jabbar said: "We did not want to quarrel in front of our guests."

The Council's next session will be on the 17th of this month.

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